THE SEVEN SAGES.

THE SEVEN SAGES.

THE

SEVEN SAGES,

IN

ENGLISH VERSE,

EDITED FROM A MANUSCRIPT IN THE PUBLIC LIBRARY
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

BY

THOMAS WRIGHT, ESQ., M.A., F.S.A.

HON. M.R.S.L., ETC.

CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE INSTITUTE OF FRANCE,
(ACADEMIE DES INSCRIPTIONS ET BELLES LETTRES.)

LONDON.

PRINTED FOR THE PERCY SOCIETY,

BY T. RICHARDS, 100, ST. MARTIN'S LANE.

M.DCCC.XLV.

18 45

BAYERISCHE
STAATS-
BIBLIOTHEK
MUENCHEN

COUNCIL

OF

The Percy Society.

President.

THE RT. HON. LORD BRAYBROOKE, F.S.A.

THOMAS AMYOT, ESQ. F.R.S. TREAS. S.A.

WILLIAM HENRY BLACK, ESQ.

WILLIAM CHAPPELL, ESQ. F.S.A.

J. PAYNE COLLIER, ESQ. F.S.A.

C. PURTON COOPER, ESQ. Q.C., F.R.S., F.S.A.

PETER CUNNINGHAM, ESQ.

JAMES HENRY DIXON, ESQ.

WILLIAM JERDAN, ESQ. F.S.A., M.R.S L.

CAPTAIN JOHNS, R.M.

T. J. PETTIGREW, ESQ. F.R.S., F.S.A.

LEWIS POCOCK, ESQ. F.S.A.

SIR CUTHBERT SHARP.

WILLIAM SANDYS, ESQ. F.S.A.

WILLIAM J. THOMS, ESQ. F.S.A.

THOMAS WRIGHT, ESQ. M.A., F.S.A., *Secretary and Treasurer.*

STAATS-
BIBLIOTHEK
MÜNCHEN

REPORT OF THE AUDITORS.

FOR 1846.

WE, the Auditors appointed by the Council of the Percy Society to examine the Accounts of the Treasurer, from the 28th of April 1845, to the 29th of April 1846, certify that the Treasurer has exhibited his Accounts to us, and that we have thoroughly examined the same, together with his Receipts and other vouchers, and that we find them to be perfectly correct and satisfactory.

And we further report that the following is a correct abstract of the Receipts and Expenditure of the Society, during the period to which we have referred :—

RECEIPTS.	£	s.	d.
Subscriptions paid up for the year ending May 1, 1846 -	202	0	0
Arrears received during the year - - - -	44	0	0
Balance in hand from the last year's Account - -	23	17	4
Subscriptions received in advance for the year commencing May 1, 1846 -	14	0	0
	£283	17	4

EXPENDITURE.	£	s.	d.
To Mr. Richards for Printing	194	15	6
Messrs Fuller and Thornhill for Paper - - -	43	16	6
For Binding - - -	10	12	6
For Engraving - -	2	10	0
Expenses allowed to Agents	0	5	9
Advertising - - -	3	9	0
Petty Expenses, Postage,&c.	8	7	3
	263	16	6
Balance in hand - -	20	0	10
	£283	17	4

And we also certify that the Treasurer has reported to us, that there remain unreceived a considerable number of Subscriptions for the past year, which he confidently expects will soon be paid.

(Signed) { JAMES PRIOR.
LEWIS POCOCK.

MEMBERS OF THE PERCY SOCIETY.

ADAMS, H. G., Esq., Rochester
Advocates' Library, Edinburgh
Ainsworth, W. Harrison, Esq., Kensal Manor House
Ainsworth, Ralph, Esq., Manchester
Allen, G. E., Esq., Bathampton
Alston, Rev. E. C., M.A., Cransford Hall, Suffolk
Amyot, Thomas, Esq., F.R.S., Treas. S.A., 13 James-street
Athenæum Club
Atkinson, F. R., Esq., Manchester
Atkinson, R. T., Esq., Newcastle
Aubyn, Rev. R. St., Lime Grove, Putney

Bagot, the Hon. Alfred
Ballantine, James, Esq., Edinburgh
Barrow, Rev. F., Cranbrook
Barrow, John, Esq., F.S.A., Admiralty
Bartlett, J., Esq., Blandford
Bartlett, J. Russell, Esq., New York
Barton, Thomas B., Esq.
Bateman, Thomas, Esq., Bakewell, Derbyshire
Beaufort, Captain, R N., F.R.S., Admiralty
Beckwith, G. M., Esq., Royal Mint
Bell, Robert, Esq., Hammersmith
Benecke, R. Esq., Denmark Hill
Benson, Rev. S.
Bentley, Richard, Esq., New Burlington-street
Besley, Rev. J., D.C.L., Newcastle
Betham, Sir William, F.S.A., M.R.I.A., Ulster King at Arms, Dublin

Bevan, Beckford, Esq.
Bevan, Edward, Esq., Milford-wharf, Strand
Bibliothèque du Roy, Paris
Blachford, J., Esq., Fulham
Black, William, Esq., M.D., 13 Bedford-street
Black, W. H., Esq., Sub-keeper of Her Majesty's Records, Rolls House
Blackie, Walter G., Esq., M.D., Glasgow
Blakesley, Rev. J. W.
Bohn, Henry G., Esq., York-street, Covent Garden
Boker, H. G., Esq.
Boone, William, Esq.
Booth, B. W., Esq., Manchester
Bowley, R. K., Esq., 53 Chancery-lane
Botfield, Beriah, Esq., M.P., F.S.A., &c.
Braybrooke, the Rt. Hon. Lord, Audley End, Essex, PRESIDENT
Brown, S. W., Esq., Lewisham, Kent
Bruce, the Rt. Hon. Sir James Lewis Knight, M.P., Vice-Chancellor, F.R.S., F.S.A.
Bruce, John, Esq., F.S.A., Clifton, Gloucestershire
Buchanan, Walter, Esq., 2 Sussex-place, Regent's-park
Bunney, W., Esq.
Burn, James, Esq., W.S., Edinburgh
Brooke J. B., Esq.
Buckley, W. E., Esq., Brasenose College, Oxford

Caldecott, Captain
Calvert, Robert, Esq.
Cambridge University Library
Capel, John, Esq., 32 Russell-square
Cartwright, Samuel, Esq., F.R.S., F.S.A.
Cartwright, W. C., Esq.
Chapin, J.H., Esq.

Chaffers, W. Esq., 42, Watling-street
Chapman, T., Esq., 14 Montagu-street, Bryanston-square
Chapman, W., Esq., Richmond
Chappell, William, Esq., F.S.A., Regent-street
Chichester, J. H. R., Esq., 49 Wimpole-street
Christy, Alexander, Esq., 35 Gracechurch-street
Clack, H. T., Esq., Argyle-place
Clark, Charles, Esq., Great Totham Hall, Essex
Clarke, Charles, Esq., 2 Middle Temple-lane
Clarke, R. G., Esq., 43 Craven-street
Clements, Rev. J., Lower Clapton
Cobbin, J. J., Esq., Stock Exchange
Collier, J. Payne, Esq., F.S.A., Victoria-road, Kensington
Constable, Thomas, Esq., Edinburgh
Conway, F. D., Esq.
Cooper, Charles Purton, Esq., Q.C., F.R.S., F.S.A., &c., New Boswell-court, Lincoln's-inn
Cooper, W. Durrant, Esq., F.S.A., Bloomsbury-square
Copenhagen Royal Library
Corner, G. R., Esq., Eltham, Kent
Corney, Bolton, Esq., Barnes-terrace, Surrey
Corser, Rev. Thomas, Manchester
Coventry, A., Esq., Edinburgh
Croker, T. Crofton, Esq., F.S.A., M.R.I.A., Admiralty
Croomes, John, Esq., St. John's-villa, North End
Crossley, James, Esq., Manchester
Crosby Hall Library
Crowninschield, Edward, Esq.
Cunningham, George, Esq., Glasgow
Cunningham, Peter, Esq., Audit Office, Somerset House
Currer, Miss Richardson, Eshton Hall, Gargrave, Yorkshire
Curzon, Hon. E. Cecil, 17 Connaught-terrace

Dalzell, Sir John Graham, Edinburgh

Daniel, George, Esq., Canonbury-terrace
Davis, Thomas, Esq., Brook-street
Deans, E. Esq.
Deck, Norris, Esq., Cambridge
Denham, M.A., Pierse Bridge, near Darlington, Yorkshire
Dent, John, Esq., Worcester
Dilke, C. W., Esq., L.L.B., Lower Grosvenor-place
Dixon, J. H., Esq., Tollington Park, Hornsey
Dobie, James, Esq., Glasgow
Dodd, George, Esq., F.S.A., Montagu-square
Dolman, Charles, Esq., 61 New Bond-street
Dowse, Thomas, Esq.
Duncan, Richard, Esq., Glasgow
Dunn, J., Esq., Paisley
Duyckinck, Evert A., Esq., New York
Duyckinck, George L., Esq., New York
Dyce, Rev. Alexander, 9 Gray's-inn-square
Duke, Rev. Henry, Collesford, near Brackley

Elliott, J. Bardoe, Esq.
Erechtheum Club, St. James's-square
Exchange Library, Manchester
Exton, Rev. R. B., Cretingham, Suffolk
Eyton, J. Walker King, Esq., Elgin Villa, Leamington
Fairholt, Frederick William, Esq., Grosvenor Cottage, Park Village East
Farnham, the Rt. Hon. Lord
Fenton, S. G., Esq., Belfast
Fish, A. G., Esq., New York
Fitch, W. Stevenson, Esq., Ipswich
Fitch, Robert, Esq., F.G.S., Norwich
Fletcher, S. Esq., Manchester
Ford, Henry, Esq., Manchester
Forde, John, Esq., 29, Surrey-street, Strand

Forster, W. E. Esq., Bradford, Yorkshire
Forster, John, Esq., 58, Lincoln's-Inn-Fields
Fox, Henry, Esq., Gloucester
Frewin, T. Esq., Brickwall House, Northiam, Lamberhurst
Furnivall, F. J., Esq.

Gaskin, Rev. John, Kingswood, near Bristol
Gelty, Edmund, Esq., Belfast
Gilbert, John Graham, Esq., Glasgow
Gilbertson, E. Esq., 24, Lombard-street
Goettingen Royal Library
Goldsmid, Sir Isaac L., F.R.S., F.S.A.
Gooding, Jonathan, Esq., Southwold
Gordon, Professor Lewis, Glasgow
Gordon, Robert, Esq., Edinburgh
Gowen, J. R., Esq., York Chambers, St. James's-street
Gracie, J. B., Esq., F.S.A.E., Edinburgh
Gray, Captain Charles., R.M., Edinburgh
Green, John, Esq.
Greenwell, W. Esq., Greenwell Ford, Durham
Greenwich Society
Griffin, Charles, Esq., Glasgow
Gutch, J. Matthew, Esq., F.S.A., Worcester

Haggard, W. D., Esq., F.S.A., F.R.A.S., Bullion Office
Hailstone, Edward, Esq., Horton Hall, Bradford, Yorkshire
Halliwell, James Orchard, Esq., Islip, Oxfordshire
Halpin, Rev. W. J., Dublin
Hannah, Rev. John, Coombe, Woodstock
Hardy, H. W., Esq., 136, Fleet-street
Hare, the Rev. Archdeacon
Hargreaves, James, Esq., Manchester
Harness, Rev. W., M.A.

Harrison, W. Esq.
Hartley, George, Esq., Settle, Yorkshire
Harvey, James, Esq.
Heffill, Henry, Esq., Diss, Norfolk
Heseltine, Samuel, Esq., Stock Exchange
Hewitt, Thomas, Esq.
Heywood, James, Esq., Acresfield, Manchester
Hill, Henry, Esq., Orchard-street
Hillard, G. S. Esq.
Hills, Walter, Esq.
Holding, James, Esq.
Holgate, William, Esq.
Hollond, Robert, Esq., M.P., 63, Portland-place
Holme, Edward, Esq., M.D., Manchester
Hope, Alexander J. B., Esq., Connaught-place
Horne, W. C., Esq., Clapham Common
Hosmer, Z., Esq., Boston, U.S.
Hunter, Rev. Joseph, F.S.A., Torrington-square
Hume, Rev. A.
Hubback, John, Esq., New-square, Lincoln's Inn
Hull Subscription Library
Hunt, Harry, Esq., Birmingham

Imperial Library, Vienna
Irving, David, Esq., L.L.D., Edinburgh
Islington Literary Institution
Jackson, Rev. S., M.A., Ipswich
Jackson, Henry, Esq., Sheffield
Jerdan, William, Esq., 32, Golden-square
Jermyn, James, Esq., Reydon, Suffolk
Johns, Capt. Rd. R.M., 13, Bowater-crescent, Woolwich
Jones, J. Esq., Holden, Manchester

Kerr, John, Esq., Glasgow
Kerr, Robert Malcolm, Esq.
Kidston, Robert A., Esq., Glasgow
Knight, William, Esq., F.S.A., 1, Canonbury-terrace
Kaye, William, Esq., Newcastle
Kinloch, R. G., Esq., Edinburgh
King's College Library, London

Laing, David, Esq., Edinburgh
Laird, Robert, Esq., Paisley
Lappenberg, Dr. J. M., Hamburg
Law, W. Esq., 37, Monkwell-street
Leader, John Temple, Esq., M.P.
Lever, Charles, Esq., 10, King's-road, Bedford-row
Liddell, Henry, Esq.
Lillingston, A. Esq.
Livermore, George, Esq., New York
Logan, W. H., Esq., Edinburgh
London (City of) Literary and Scientific Institution
London Library, Pall Mall
London Institution, Finsbury Circus
Lower, M. A., Esq., Lewes
Ludlow, Ebenezer, Esq., M.A., &c.
Lupton, Harry, Esq., Thame, Oxfordshire

M'Gregor, Alexander, Esq., Glasgow
Mackenzie, John Whitefoord, Esq., Edinburgh
Mackenzie, A. C., Esq., St. John's College, Oxford
Mac Iver, Charles, Esq., Liverpool
Macknight, James, Esq., Edinburgh
Maconochie, James Allan, Esq., Edinburgh
Macauley, Colin Campbell, Esq., Leicester

Macturk, William M., Esq., Bradford, Yorkshire
Maidment, James, Esq., Edinburgh
Mainwaring, C. Esq., Coleby Hall, Lincolnshire
Major, C. J., Esq., 3, Barnsbury-street, Islington
Manchée, T. J., Esq., Bristol
Manchester Exchange Library
Markland, J. H., Esq., F.S.A., Bath
Matthew, J. M., Esq., 4, Gray's-Inn-square
Maude, Hartwell J., Esq., 14, George-street, Westminster
Mewburn, Francis, Esq., 9, Great Winchester-street
Michelot, M. Paul
Miland, John, Esq., 35, Chapel-street, Belgrave-square
Mitford, Rev. John, Benhall, Suffolk
Moore, J. S., Esq.
Moran, E. Raleigh, Esq.
Morris, W. G., Esq.
Morton, Rev. James, Holbeach
Muggeridge, Nathaniel, Esq., Queen-street, Cheapside
Murch, the Rev. Jerome, Bath

Nicholl, G. W., Esq., Plowden-buildings, Temple
Nichols, John Gough, Esq., F.S.A., 25, Parliament-street
Nimmo, Thomas, Esq.
Nottingham Subscription Library

Ormerod, Geo. Esq., D.C.L., F.R.S., F.S.A., Sedbury Park
Ouvry, Frederick, Esq., 49, Oxford-terrace

Pagan, S. A., Esq., M.D., Edinburgh
Palmer, Arthur, Esq., Bristol
Parkinson, Rev. Richard, Manchester
Peacock, Reginald, Esq., West Bolden, Sunderland
Percival, Richard, Esq., Highbury-park, Islington

Petit, Lewis Hayes, Esq., F.R.S.
Pettigrew, T. Joseph, Esq., F.R.S., F.S.A., 8, Saville-row
Phillips, Samuel, Esq., 7, Hamilton-place, St. John's Wood
Pickering, William, Esq., Piccadilly
Pickslay, E. J., Esq.
Pitcairn, Robert, Esq., Edinburgh
Piper, Hamilton, Esq.
Pocock, Charles Innes, Esq., Bristol
Pocock, Lewis, Esq., F.S.A.
Ponton, Thomas, Esq., M.A., F.S.A., 4, Hill-street
Powell, J. P., Esq., Quax-park, Margate
Priaulx, Osmond de Beauvoir, Esq.
Prideaux, W. Esq., Goldsmiths' Hall, City
Prior, James, Esq.
Putnam, G. P., Esq.

Read, John, Esq., Derwent Hall, near Sheffield
Reed, S. J., Esq., Friday-street, City
Remsen, S. R., Esq.
Repton, John Adey, Esq., F.S.A., Springfield, Chelmsford
Richards, Thomas, Esq., Victoria-road, Kensington
Richardson, C. G., Esq., Tanfield-court, Temple
Richardson, M. A., Esq., Newcastle
Richardson, W. S., Esq., Tanfield-court, Temple
Rickards, Samuel, Esq., Piccadilly
Robertson, Murdoch, Esq., Edinburgh
Robinson, Henry Crabb, Esq., F.S.A., 30, Russell-square
Row, James Yeeles, Esq., Page Green, Tottenham
Rovedino, T., Esq., Osnaburgh-street
Roxburghe, Andrew, Esq., Edinburgh

Sandys, Charles, Esq., Canterbury
Sandys, W., Esq., F.S.A., 25, Devonshire-st., Portland-pl.
Scott, J. J., Esq., 12, College-street, Westminster

Shackell, William, Esq., M.R.S.L., Hammersmith
Sharpe, Sir Cuthbert, Sunderland
Sheddon, Thomas, Esq., Glasgow
Shirreff, James Hales, Esq., M.D., Blackheath
Smets, A. A., Esq., Savanna
Smith, Alexander, Esq., Edinburgh
Smith, R. J., Esq., 31, Brydges-street, Covent Garden
Smith, J. Russell, Esq., Old Compton-street
Smith, John, Esq., LL.D., Glasgow
Smith, Charles Roach, Esq., F.S.A., 5, Liverpool-street, City
Smith, Thomas, Esq., F.S.A., Birstall House
Smith, Thomas, Esq., Colchester
Smith, J., Glasgow
Smith, W. J., Esq., F.S.A., Office of Woods and Forests
Smith, Frederick, Esq., M.D., Holbeach
Sopwith, Thomas, Esq., Newcastle
Sotheby, S. Leigh, Esq., Wellington-street
Spalding, J., Esq., Edinburgh
Spencer, G. B., Esq., 8, New Burlington-street
Stewart, Duncan, Esq., Edinburgh
Stokes, George, Esq., Cheltenham
Strang, John, Esq., Glasgow
Streeten, R. J. N., Esq.
Swanston, C. Tudway, Esq., Q.C., Chancery-lane

Taylor, Arnold, Esq.
Taylor, Richard, Esq., F.S.A., Red-lion-court, Fleet-street
Thompson, Rev. G. Hodgson, Tottenham
Thompson, Jonathan, Esq., Temple Grove, East Sheen
Tite, W., Esq., F.R.S., &c., Upper Bedford-place
Thoms, W. J., Esq., 31, Marsham-street, Westminster
Thornton, Rev. F. V., Bisham Vicarage, Great Marlow

Trinity College Library, Dublin
Turnbull, W. B. D. D., Esq., Edinburgh
Turner, R. S., Esq., 31, Haymarket
Turner, Francis, Esq., 9, Queen-street, Westminster
Turner, Rev. S. B., F.S.A.

Utterson, Edward Vernon, Esq., F.S.A., Ryde, Isle of Wight
Vallé, Frederick, Esq., Haymarket
Van de Weyer, his Excellency M. Silvain, Portland-place
Vines, W., Esq., F.S.A.

Walsh, James, Esq., F.S.A., 49, Stamford-street
Wansey, William, Esq., F.S.A., Riches-court, Cornhill
Warne, Charles, Esq., Blandford
Warner, Patrick, Esq.
Warren de Tabley, the Rt. Hon. Lord
Welford, Charles, Esq.
White, George, Esq., 12, Hatton-garden
White, Robert, Esq., Newcastle
Whitmore, H., Esq., Manchester
Wilkes, John, Esq.
Willcox, B. M., Esq.
Wilson, J., Esq., 47, Gower-street
Wilson, Walter, Esq., Trenchay, near Bristol
Windus, B. Godfrey, Esq., Tottenham
Woodley, Frank, Esq., Cork
Woolley, E., Esq., Denmark-street
Worship, Francis, Esq., 66, Lincoln's-Inn-Fields
Wreford, Rev. J. Reynell, F.S.A., Bristol
Wright, Thomas, Esq., M.A., F.S.A., &c., 18, Gilbert-street, Grosvenor-square, SECRETARY AND TREASURER

INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVEN SAGES.

THE romance of the Seven Sages is one of the most remarkable of the medieval collections of stories, and belongs to the same class as the celebrated Thousand and One Nights of the Arabians, in which one simple story is employed as a means of stringing together a multitude of subsidiary tales. Its form would at once lead us to look for its origin in the East; and it is interesting to us, because we have materials which enable us to trace distinctly its history throughout its migration from distant India to Western Europe. Fortunately, the task of tracing this history has been already executed for us by a young and promising French orientalist, now dead, M. Loiseleur Deslongchamps, in his *Essai sur les Fables Indiennes, et sur leur Introduction en Europe*, published in 1838; and as that book is not much known in England, I shall content myself with giving an abstract of as much of it as relates to our present subject.

The title of the Indian romance was *Sendabad*,

and it appears to have been composed at a very remote, though unknown period. The Arabian historian, Massoudi, who died in A.D. 956 (345 of the hegira), says that this book was composed by an Indian philosopher named Sendabad, who was the contemporary of a king named Courou; and it appears that in Massoudi's time, there existed a translation of it in Arabic or Persian. Two oriental writers, cited by M. Loiseleur Deslongchamps, state that the book of Sendabad was composed under the Persian dynasty of the Arsacides, which began 256 years before Christ, and ended towards A.D. 223. From this Indian original were derived three works founded on the same plot, but differing a little in the details: the Arabian romance of "The king, his son, the favourite, and the seven viziers," which was translated into English by Jonathan Scott, in 1800; the Hebrew romance of the Parables of Sendabar; and the Greek romance of Syntipas (*Συντίπας*). In each of these, a young prince, falsely accused by one of the wives of the king, his father, of having attempted to offer her violence, is defended by seven sages or philosophers, who relate a series of stories calculated to show the malice and perversity of the female sex, and the danger of a condemnation without proofs.

The date of the formation of these three romances is unknown. The Hebrew version of the Parables of Sendabar (the last letter of which word has probably arisen from confounding the two Hebrew letters ד and ר) is, at least, as old as the end of the twelfth century. The Greek romance of Syntipas is preceded by a metrical prologue, which informs us that it was the work of a certain Andreopulus, who avows himself a worshipper of Christ, and declares that he translated it from the Syriac. It is here also stated, that a Persian named Mousos was the first author of the work, from which Silvestre de Sacy conjectured that a person of the common Saracenic name of Mousa had translated Sendabad into Arabic or Persian.

The Hebrew romance, which is preserved in manuscript, appears to have been the original from which a monk of the abbey of Haute-Selve, in the bishopric of Nancy, in France, named John, composed, early in the thirteenth century, the prose Latin romance, entitled, *Historia septem sapientum Romæ*, through which this work was communicated to nearly all the languages of Western Europe. A trouvère of the thirteenth century, named Herbert, or Hebert, made a very free translation, or rather imitation, in French verse, of this Latin romance, in which he has added several

stories, and altered considerably such stories of the original as he has retained. This version is best known by the title of Dolopathos, which is here the name of the king whose son is the hero of the poem. There appears to be no room for doubt that Herbert lived in the first half of the thirteenth century. Another trouvère, whose name is unknown, composed also in the thirteenth century, a French metrical romance of the Seven Sages, which is a close version of the Latin romance; and this was also translated into French prose before the end of the same century.* The English versions, of which there were several, were evidently founded upon these French versions. The Latin romance was also translated at a subsequent period into German, Dutch, and Danish.† In Italy, in the sixteenth century, appeared an imitation of this romance, under the title of the Adventures of Prince Erastus (*Li compassionevoli avvenimenti d'Erasto*), which was evidently

---

* The anonymous French metrical romance was published in Germany in 1836, by Professor Keller, with a very learned introduction in German. The prose romance, with large extracts from the romance of Dolopathos, was published by M. Leroux de Lincy in 1838.

† On the editions of these translations, printed in the fifteenth century, see Keller's Introduction to the Roman des Sept Sages.

founded upon the Latin work of John of Haute-Selve, although pretended to be taken from the Greek. The adventures of Erastus were translated successively into French, Spanish, and English.

Having thus briefly enumerated the different known versions of this singular romance, it will probably not be thought uninteresting to give a comparative analysis of the three earliest versions, beginning with the Greek Συντίπας.*

According to this romance, a king of Persia, named Cyrus, had seven wives, none of whom had borne him any children. But after having long offered up his prayers to the deity, a son was born to him; and when the young prince had passed his infancy, he was placed under several successive masters, without making any progress in learning. The king thereupon resolved to entrust the education of his son to a philosopher named Syntipas, who undertook to make him master of every part of philosophy within six months. Syntipas caused a large house to be built, and had painted upon the walls of the apartments representations

---

* The Greek text was printed at Paris in 1828, by Boissonade. It may be observed that there is a modern Greek version, which is of little importance in the history of the romance.

of all the subjects which he wished to impress upon the mind of the royal youth. When everything was ready, he placed his pupil in his new residence, and the young prince made such rapid progress, that at the end of the six months he knew all that the philosopher had undertaken to teach him. On the eve of the day fixed for the completion of his education, the king reminded Syntipas of his promise, and the latter prepared to take the prince to court on the morrow. But during the night, the philosopher consulted the stars, and saw with consternation that the life of the prince would be in danger, if he were carried back to his father within seven days after the period agreed upon. The philosopher informs his scholar of his danger, and they agree that the young prince shall go to court the next day, but that he shall keep strict silence during the seven days, while Syntipas hides himself to avoid the king's anger. The youth accordingly repairs to the palace, but, to the astonishment of his father and the courtiers, he remains dumb to all the questions that are put to him. One of the wives of Cyrus begs to be intrusted with the prince, takes him into her apartment, and employs prayers and caresses to engage him to break his silence. Finding all her endeavours useless, she tries to

tempt his ambition, and undertakes to effect the death of his father, and place him on the throne, if he will promise to marry her. The prince, in his indignation, is unable to restrain his tongue: "Learn," cried he, "that I cannot answer thee at present, but in seven days I will." The woman, perceiving her own danger, now determines to effect the ruin of the prince; she tears her garments, scratches her face, and hurries to the king to complain of the brutal treatment she has received from his son. Cyrus, in his anger, condemns the prince to death. At the court were seven councillors, or philosophers, who enjoyed the monarch's confidence; and when they heard of the king's judgment, they could not believe the prince guilty, but suspected some treachery on the part of his accuser. They, therefore, resolved each to pass a whole day with the king to endeavour to moderate his anger, fearing that Cyrus might afterwards repent of the death of his son, and look upon them as responsible for it. Each tells the king a story.

This introduction is nearly the same in the Hebrew and Arabic stories, with the exception that in the Parables of Sendabar, where the scene is placed in India, the king, named Bibur, chooses, for the preceptors of his son, seven philosophers, who have

almost all names corrupted from the Greek, among which we recognize those of Apollonius, Lucian, Aristotle, and Hippocrates. Sendabar, the chief of the philosophers, is finally charged with the education of the prince. In the history of the Seven Viziers, no names are given to these personages.

(1.) The philosopher, whose lot it was to take the first day, immediately repaired to the palace, and prostrating himself before the king, said,— "Sire, a king ought to come to no determination, until he is well assured of the truth, as is evinced by the following story." He then relates to him how a king, who was passionately fond of women, saw one day a lady of surpassing beauty, with whom he fell violently in love. That he might enjoy the object of his passion, he sent the husband on a distant mission, and in his absence visited the lady, and made a declaration of his love, but all his prayers were useless. The lady represented to him the unworthiness of his conduct, and the king, unable to overcome her resistence, retired, unconscious that he had dropped his ring. The husband, on his return, finds the ring near the bed, and recognizes it as that of the king. Convinced that the prince has penetrated into the conjugal chamber, he resolves to abstain, in future, from all commerce with his wife. At length the lady,

from whom her husband had concealed his suspicions, and who, on her part, did not venture to mention to him what had taken place, hurt at his coldness, complains to her father and brothers, who cited the husband before the king. "Sire," they said, "we have given to this man a field on condition that he should sow it, and he leaves it uncultivated: let him return it to us, or let him cultivate it as he ought." "What is thy answer to this complaint?" said the king. "Sire," replied the husband, "what they have stated is true. For a time I cultivated the field which they had given me, but one day I perceived in it the track of a lion, and since that I have not dared to approach it."—"Fear nothing," said the king; "the lion, it is true, entered into thy field, but he did no harm, and will not return again; cultivate it as before."

This story is found with very little variations in the Parables of Sendabar, and in the Seven Viziers. In the former, instead of the ring, the king forgets his cane. In the latter, the prince, who has supped with the lady, performs his ablutions before his departure, and leaves his ring under the cushion of the sofa. The same tale is found in a Turkish collection, entitled *Adjâïb-el-Measer*, from which Cardonne translated it under the title of *La Pantoufle du Sultan*, in the *Mélanges de Littérature Orientale*.

(2.) After having shown from this story that we must not always trust in appearances, the first philosopher tells another, in order to put the king on his guard against the malice of womankind. A merchant, curious to know what passed in his house during his absence, bought a parrot which had the quality of telling all it had seen and heard. The merchant put it in a cage, and ordered it to watch the behaviour of his wife, while he was occupied abroad with his business. As soon as the merchant left his home, the parrot saw that a lover came to visit the lady; and he informed the merchant of this circumstance on his return. From this moment, the latter showed so much coldness towards his wife, that she was convinced he had been made acquainied with her conduct, though she knew not how. A female slave, who was in the confidence of her mistress, and was very cunning, guessed that the parrot was the informer, and they consulted together to find an expedient to destroy the bird's credit, which was done as follows: when night was come, and the parrot appeared to be asleep, the lady hung the cage beside a hand-mill, and suspended over it a large sponge, full of water, then rapidly turning the mill, she flashed a light at intervals before the bird, which, dazzled by the light, and

confounded by the noise, and soaked with the water that kept running down from the sponge, imagined it had been a violent storm. When he made his report to the merchant the next morning, the latter, knowing that it had been a calm night, no longer believed what the parrot told him, and became reconciled with his wife.

This story, which is found in the Parables of Sendabar, and in the Seven Viziers, occurs also in the Thousand and One Nights, and is repeated so frequently under different forms in the literature of the middle ages, that it is hardly necessary to give references.

(3.) These two stories changed the determination of Cyrus, who now resolved not to put his son to death. But the king's wife, next day, again decides him to order his son's execution, by relating a rather foolish story (found also in the Hebrew and Arabic) of a fuller who was drowned in attempting to save the life of his son. The king is thus made, during the seven days, to change his intention twice every day.

(4.) At the moment when the prince is being led to execution, the second philosopher presents himself, and recites a very unmeaning story of two cakes, to show the king the rashness of his judgment. (5.) He then tells the following story,

to show that a woman's wit in contriving tricks is inexhaustible. A married woman had an officer for her lover. One day, when her husband was absent, the lover sent his slave to know if he might visit her, and the slave, being young and handsome, pleased the lady, which led her to commit a new act of infidelity. The officer, tired of waiting, and impatient to see his mistress, went himself to her house, and reached the door at the moment she was indulging her new passion. She hastily concealed the slave in her inner apartment, and then received her lover with all her ordinary tenderness, and was proceeding to further criminalities, when they were disturbed by the sudden arrival of her husband. How to escape, it was not easy to see. If she put the officer into the inner chamber, he would find his slave, and discover the faithlessness of his mistress; by the other door, he would meet her husband. The lady suddenly thought of an expedient: "Take your sword in your hand," she said, "pretend to be in a violent rage, load me with abuse, and rush out into the street, without speaking to my husband." The officer did as he was told, and the husband, terrified and alarmed, inquired of his wife the cause of all this uproar. "That officer," she replied, "came here in pursuit of his slave, whom

I have concealed in our inner room, to save him from his anger, and my refusal to deliver him threw him into the rage in which you saw him." The credulous husband immediately ran into the street to watch the officer, and when he found that he was no longer to be seen, he came back, and said to the slave, "You may now go out in peace, for your master is out of sight."

This story is found in the Parables of Sendabar, and in the Seven Viziers. We meet with it also in the Indian collection entitled *Hitopadesa*, which was compiled before the Mahommedan conquest, so that we trace it direct to an Indian origin. It is found in the *Decameron*, and is repeated over and over again in the collections of the middle ages.

(6.) These two stories save the life of the prince during the second day, but the next morning the queen by the following tale procured a new order for his execution. A young prince goes a hunting, attended by one of the councillors of the king, his father. In the ardour of the chase, he becomes separated from his followers, and meets with a lamia, or ogress, who presents herself to him as a princess who had lost her way. He takes her up behind him, but he soon perceives his danger, and in his terror raises his eyes towards heaven, and exclaims, "Lord Christ, have pity on thy servant,

and deliver him from the demon!" Immediately the lamia, darting from the horse, disappears under the earth, and the young prince hastens back in a state of agitation to his father's palace. The queen represents this adventure as a snare set for the young prince by the minister who accompanied him, and takes the opportunity of prejudicing Cyrus against his advisers.

This story is found in the two other versions, and occurs also in the Thousand and One Nights. In the Parables of Sendabar, instead of the lamia we have a female demon named *Schidah*.

(7.) The third philosopher now comes forward to counteract the queen, and tells the story of a sanguinary war which arose between two neighbouring countries on account of a bee-hive that had been stolen; to show that great events often arise from small causes. (8.) In a second story, he again represents to the king the ingenuity of woman's malice. A man sent his wife to the market to buy rice. The merchant of whom she buys it, is captivated by her good looks; he tells her that rice is generally eaten with sugar, and offers to give her some gratuitously, if she will consent to gratify his desires. The woman requires that the sugar shall be first given to her;

and wrapping it up with the rice in a cloth, she intrusts it to the shop-boy, and follows the merchant into his apartment. In the meantime, the lad takes the sugar and rice away, and puts an equal quantity of earth in its place. The woman takes away her parcel without examining it, and carries it to her husband, who is much astonished at finding nothing in it but earth. The woman at once perceives the trick which has been played upon her, but without being in the least disconcerted, she replies to her husband's enquiries, "I fell down in the market, and lost my money; and I collected the earth from the spot where I fell, in the hope that by passing it through a sieve, the money would be found." The simple husband approves of what she had done, and loses his time in sifting the earth without finding his money.

This story is found in the Indian collection translated into Persian under the title of the *Tooti-nameh*, (the tales of a parrot,) as well as in the Parables of Sendabar, and in the Seven Viziers. It also occurs in the *Directorium humanæ vitæ* of John of Capua, fol. E 3, v°.

(8.) The king having again revoked his sentence, the queen returns next day to the attack with a singular story. A young prince departs

for the court of a king, whose daughter he is to marry, accompanied by one of the ministers of the king, his father. On the road, the minister, under a false pretext, leaves the prince near a spring which has the power of changing those who drink of it into women, and, returning home, announces to his father that he has been devoured by a lion. The young prince, left alone, drinks of the fatal spring, and immediately feels its effects. Fortunately he meets with a peasant, who agrees to become a woman in his place, on condition that his natural form shall be restored to him at the end of four months. The young prince repairs to the court of the king, whose daughter had been affianced to him, marries her, and eludes the fulfilment of his promise to the peasant. The guilty minister is put to death. The queen again blames the conduct of the councillors of Cyrus, and the order is given for the execution of his son.

In the Parables of Sendabar, this story makes part of that of the prince and the lamia. The prince, after being changed into a woman, passes the night near the enchanted fountain, which turns men into women, and women into men; and in the morning he meets in the forest a troop of young girls, to whom alone he discloses his rank, and the misfortune

which had happened to him. By their advice, he drinks again of the fountain, and a second metamorphosis takes place. In the Seven Viziers, the metamorphosed prince meets with a genius, who leads him to another spring, by the virtue of which his sex is restored to him. This is perhaps the correct version of the story, which is rendered confused in the Greek. The notion of springs which change the sexes of those who drink of them, is taken from the ancients.

(9.) The philosopher, whose turn it is to save the prince's life on the fourth day, begins with a singular tale, the object of which is to show the danger of acting inconsiderately. The son of a king laboured under a deformity which it is not easy to express in English, *ἦν δὲ αὐτὸς παχὺς ἅμα καὶ εὐμεγέθης, ὡς ἐκ τοῦ πάχους μὴ καθορᾶσθαι τὰ τούτου αἰδοῖα.* One day that he was at the bath, the keeper of the bath, when he saw him, shed tears at the thought that the heir of the throne would be incapable himself of having heirs. The young prince asked him why he wept, and the other told him his reflections. "Know," said the prince, "that my father is going to marry me, but having conceived the same doubts that you now feel, I desire, in order to know if I ought to marry, to converse with a woman, and I beg that

you will find me one." The keeper of the bath, greedy of gain, conceived the unfortunate idea of offering his own wife, believing his honour in perfect security with a man like the prince. He soon discovered his error; a secret witness of the interview between his wife and the prince, he saw things which he was far from expecting, and in despair put an end to his own life.

This story is taken from one in the Indian collection, entitled the Hipotadesa. It was preserved in the Medieval Seven Sages, and will be found in the English text, edited in the present volume, p. 52.

(10.) This philosopher, as usual, follows up his argument with a tale illustrative of the perversity of the female sex. A young wife parts with her husband, who is going on a distant journey, and they swear mutual fidelity. On the day fixed for his return, she goes to meet him, but he does not arrive. On the way, a young man sees her, and is struck with her beauty; he makes proposals to her, which she rejects with indignation. Mortified at the refusal of his offer, the young man goes to an old procuress, who promises to assist him. She makes a cake, in which she puts a large quantity of pepper, and she gives this to a bitch which

she takes with her to the house of the young woman whom she intends to deceive. The pepper soon brings tears to the eyes of the bitch, and the young woman asks why it cries. The old hag is ready with her answer: "This bitch is my daughter. A young man was desperately in love with her; she would not listen to him; her lover cursed her in his despair, and she was immediately changed into a bitch, and now she laments her fault." The young wife, terrified at the prospect thus offered to her, tells the old woman what had passed between herself and the young man, and declares that she is willing to receive him. The old woman hastens to seek the lover, but cannot find him. In her embarrassment, she determines to take to the lady the first man she meets, which happens to be her husband, who accepts the proposal, and is surprised at being conducted to his own house. His wife, hiding her surprise, loads him with reproaches, and tells him that she intended to prove him, and that she finds he is unworthy of her love. The poor husband excuses himself as well as he can, and succeeds, not without difficulty, in appeasing her anger.

This story, with the exception of the conclusion, is found in the Indian collection, entitled *Vrihat-Kathâ;* and it was exceedingly popular in the

middle ages. See my *Latin Stories* (Percy Society's publication), pp. 16 and 218, and *Anecdota Literaria*, p. 1. The dénouement of the story in Syntipas, which is the same in the Parables of Sendabar and in the Seven Viziers, appears to be borrowed from a tale in the Tooti-nameh, English translation, p. 62.

(11.) The wife of Cyrus, finding that the fourth philosopher had also been successful, threatens to poison herself if the prince is not put to death, and tells the king he will have the same fate as a wild boar, of which she relates a very ridiculous tale. This wild boar, which was in the habit of eating the figs that fell from a certain fig-tree, found one day a monkey in the tree. The monkey throws him down some figs, which he finds much better than those he had been accustomed to eat. The expectation of receiving others makes him remain so long in the same attitude that the veins of his neck burst, and he dies of suffocation.

The story of the monkey and the boar is found in the fables of Bidpai. In the Parables of Sendabar, instead of the monkey, a man who is working in the field, seeing the boar, takes refuge in the fig-tree, and throws down the figs. The Latin romance of the Seven Sages gives the same version of the story,

which is an additional proof of its being taken from the Hebrew. It is repeated in our English text, p. 32 of the present volume, with rather a different dénouement.

(12.) Next day the fifth philosopher comes to intercede for the prince. He begins by showing Cyrus the danger of hasty judgments, in the story of a king's officer who, imagining that his dog had devoured the child entrusted to his charge, kills the animal in a moment of anger, and then, finding that the blood with which the faithful dog was covered was that of a serpent which it had slain in defending the life of the child, abandons himself to unavailing grief.

This story, which has been so popular in all ages, is found in the Indian collection of the *Pantcha-tantra*. It is found in our metrical English version of the Seven Sages, p. 26 of the present volume. Our readers will remember the Welsh legend of Bedd-gelert.

(13.) The same philosopher tells a second story on the never-failing theme of the perversity of the other sex. A man, who was given to the most licentious habits, having heard of the beauty of a lady who lived in his neighbourhood, had the impudence to introduce himself into her house,

and to make an attempt upon her virtue; but she rejected his proposals with indignation. His desires were only increased by this repulse, and he went to an old procuress, and offered her a very considerable sum of money if she would betray the lady into his power. The old woman said, "Go to the market, present yourself to the husband of this woman, and buy of him a mantle, which you must bring to me." The man did so, and she burnt the mantle in three places, and took it with her to the house, on a visit to the woman whose husband had sold it, and contrived to conceal it under the pillow of his bed. At dinner-time, the husband comes home weary with his labour, and seeks repose in his bed. In arranging his pillow, he finds the mantle, recognizes it, and believing his wife unfaithful, he ill-treats her, and turns her out of doors, and she seeks refuge among her relatives. The old woman hastens to visit her: "I know," she says, "what is the matter; a wicked sorcerer is the cause of the mischief, but I know a wise doctor who can set all right. Come directly to my house and see him, and he will soon bring about a reconciliation with your husband." The poor woman yields to her advice; and the procuress brings the lover to her house the same evening, introduces him to the lady in

a secret apartment, and he effects his purpose by force. After having fully satisfied his desires, the young man expresses his regret at having disturbed the peace of the family. "Be not uneasy on that account," said the old woman, "but follow my directions. Go to the market, and present yourself before the husband. He will certainly question you about the mantle. Tell him that this mantle having been placed carelessly near the fire, was burnt in three places, and that you had employed an old woman to mend it. I will at that moment pass by, as if by accident, you shall abuse me, and I will confess that I have lost your mantle." This plot has a complete success; the husband, convinced of his mistake, begs his wife's pardon, and she, not without some difficulty, agrees to a reconciliation.

This story was very popular in the middle ages, and was the subject of a French fabliau. A tale, somewhat similar, is found in the Metamorphoses of Apuleius.

(14.) The wife of king Cyrus again decides him to put his son to death, by a strange story, found in Syntipas and the Parables of Sendabar, of a robber who took refuge in a wood, and who managed to escape from the perils to which he

was exposed by a lion and a monkey leagued together against him.

(15.) Next day, the sixth philosopher tells two stories, in one of which, undoubtedly of eastern origin, a pigeon having after the harvest made a store of corn, which he had placed in the hole of a roof, agreed with his mate not to touch it during the summer. But the heat having dried up the grain, the pigeon imagined that his female had secretly stolen it, and killed her in a fit of rage. The humidity of autumn having again swelled the grain, the pigeon too late discovered his error. (16.) The other story appears to be peculiar to Syntipas, and is not worth an analysis.

(17.) The queen, who is aware that the time is fast approaching when the king's son will be able to speak, again threatens to commit suicide if he is not immediately put to death; and prevails on the king to order his execution. The seventh philosopher now makes his appearance, and begins with a strange story to show the danger of acting hastily. A man had at his orders a demon, by means of whom he was enabled to know the future. Crowds of people came to consult him, and he gained great sums of money. One day the demon said to him, "I am going to leave you, but before I go, you may make three wishes,

which shall be immediately gratified." The good man, after hesitating some time, ended by taking the advice of his wife. Ἡ δὲ γυνὴ . . φησί . . *οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἀγαπητικώτερον εἰς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐστὶ, ἢ μόνον τὸ κοιμᾶσθαι ἄνδρα μετὰ γυναικός. Ζήτησον οὖν τὸν Θεὸν πολλοὺς ὄρχεις γενέσθαι ἐν τῷ σώματί σου.* The man followed his wife's advice, but his wish was granted more abundantly than he expected, —*καὶ, ἅμα τῇ εὐχῇ αὐτοῦ, ὅλον τὸ σῶμα γέγονε μεστὸν καὶ νεφρῶν καὶ ὄρχεων.* In his hurry to be relieved from the embarrassing effects of his wish, the man commits a blunder which it requires his third wish to repair, and he remains at last in the same situation as if he had had no wishes at all. Καὶ *ἅμα, . . αἰτεῖται παρὰ Θεοῦ, καὶ ἐλευτερώθη τῶν ὄρχεων. ἔχασε δὲ μετὰ τούτων καὶ ἅπερ εἶχεν ἀπὸ γενέσεως . . ἢ δὲ φησί . . ζήτησον τὸν Θεὸν τοὺς ἀπὸ γεννήσεος σου ὄρχεὶς λαβεῖν.*

I should not have ventured to give any account of this singular story, which occurs in the Parables of Sendabar and in the Seven Viziers, had it not been evidently the foundation of an early French fabliau, entitled *Les quatre souhaits Saint Martin*, which is even more indecent than the original. A similar story is found in the Indian *Pantcha-tautra ;* and a variety of analogous tales are met with, both in the east and in the west.

(18.) The seventh philosopher, in a second tale, makes a new attack upon the character of the ladies. A man had sworn never to rest or settle himself at home, until he had arrived at a knowledge of all the tricks and contrivances of the other sex. He went on his travels, and having made a considerable collection of all the artifices of women, and believing that he had fully effected his object, he determined to return home. Arriving at a place where a man was giving a great feast, he was admitted to it as a stranger. He takes his place at table, and during the repast he relates to the guests the object of his travels. The master of the house, for motives which are not very clearly stated, tells his wife to take the stranger with her, and to serve him a collation alone, in a private apartment. When she is alone with him, she asks him if he thinks he has collected all the malicious inventions of which women are capable, and he replies that he is certain of it. "Let us see, then," says she, "if you have the following in your repertory. A man, married to an honest and virtuous woman, was always attacking the character of the fair sex. 'Do not abuse them all,' said his half, 'but only those who are wicked.' 'All,' replied the husband. 'Don't say that,' she answered, 'since you have not

been unfortunate in this respect.' 'If I had one of those bad women,' said the man, 'I would cut off her nose.' His wife resolved to teach him more prudence. One day her husband said to her, 'I am going to-morrow to the fields; you will prepare my dinner, and bring it to me.' The woman hurried to the market, bought some fish, and scattered them here and there in the place where her husband was going to work. He, finding the fish, carried them home to his wife to be cooked. When she spread the table, the man asked for his fishes. 'What fishes?' said she. 'Those I found in my field,' replied the husband. The woman immediately called in her neighbours to witness the folly of her husband, who pretended to have caught fishes in a ploughed field. The man persists in his assertions; the neighbours laugh at him; he flies into a violent passion; and then they no longer doubt that he is possessed by a devil, and they seize him and put him in bonds. The husband remained obstinate during three days, but at last, thoroughly weary of his captivity, he agreed that his wife was in the right, and she set him at liberty. 'Now,' said she, 'all that you have said is true enough; but as you pretended that if you had a naughty wife you would kill her, I thought I would give you a

lesson.'" The stranger was thrown off his guard by this story; the lady, who was young and beautiful, made tender advances, and he was easily seduced; but at the moment that he was on the point of enjoying his supposed conquest, she set up a great cry, and called for help. The stranger hurried to his place at the table, terrified at seeing the guests crowding into the room to the assistance of their hostess. "What is the matter?" they all cried. "Nothing," said the lady, "this stranger nearly choked himself, as he was eating, and I could not help crying out; but he is now recovered." The guests immediately left the room, and the lady said to the stranger, "Well! are the story I have told you, and the trick I have played, in your collection?" He was obliged to confess the impossibility of knowing all the wicked tricks of which the sex were capable; he threw his collection into the fire, returned home, and married.

This story seems to be peculiar to Syntipas. Several tales, bearing a rather close analogy to it, were current in the middle ages.

(19.) The life of the young prince is thus preserved till the eighth day, when he could speak without fear, and he told his father the

cause of his silence. The king, overjoyed at his son's escape, called together his philosophers, and said, "If I had put my son to death within the seven days, who would have been chargeable with his death, myself, my son, or this woman?" The philosophers, however, gave unsatisfactory answers, and the young prince told the following story:—

"A man having invited several friends to dinner, sent his slave to buy milk. As she was returning home with her pot full of milk on her head, a kite passed over her, carrying a serpent in its claws. In its struggles, the serpent shed its venom, which fell into the pot. The slave, perfectly ignorant of what had happened, served the milk to the guests, and they were all poisoned."

The prince asked the philosophers to whom this unfortunate event was to be imputed, and after a discussion among them, he resolved the question himself, by asserting that destiny alone was to be accused. He then told two stories, the object of which was to show the sagacity and good sense of children. The second of these merits to be recited.

(20.) Three merchants visit together a country for affairs of commerce, and take up their lodging in the house of an old woman. Before going to the bath, they put their gold and silver in three

purses, which they deposit in the hands of their hostess, strictly ordering her not to give them up unless all three ask for them together. At a short distance from the house, they find that they have forgotten a comb, and one of the party is sent back to fetch it. But, instead of asking for the comb, he asks for the three purses of money, which the woman delivers into his hands when she sees his two companions holding up their hands to show that he came with their assent, and he immediately runs away with his prize. The two merchants, missing their companion, return to the house, and learn what has taken place. They immediately cite their hostess before the judge, and obtain a judgment, by which she is ordered to make good their loss. The poor woman leaves the court in tears, and meets with a child, who enquires what is the matter with her, and offers to help her out of her difficulties if she will give him money to buy nuts. She willingly assents to this, and he then tells her to return to the judge, to state that she is ready to restore the money, when the three merchants present themselves together, but that she will not give it to two of them, without the third. The judge now gives a decision in favour of the woman, and learning that it was a child who had suggested to her this

line of defence, he sent for the child, and appointed him master over the philosophers and rhetoricians.

I have met with this tale among the Latin stories of the thirteenth and fourteen centuries, but I cannot call to mind in what collection. It is found, a little varied in the details, in the *Nouveaux contes à rire*, Amsterdam, 1737, under the title *Jugement subtil du duc d'Ossone contre deux Marchands.*

(21.) The prince next relates the story of a merchant, who succeeded in escaping from the hands of a number of rogues. A merchant who dealt in aromatic woods, having heard that this merchandise was rare in a certain city, and was there bought up at a very high price, made a bundle of all the wood he had of that kind, and set off with it towards the city alluded to. When he came to the town gates, he halted awhile, in hopes of gaining information as to the price at which he might offer his wood. In the course of the day, he met a female slave, belonging to one of the principal inhabitants of the city, and in answer to her questions, informed her of the nature of his merchandise. The slave immediately carried this information to her master, who was a very cunning man, and he collected all the aromatic wood he had, and threw it in the

fire. The smell of this wood reached the merchant, who at first thought it was his own parcel which had taken fire, but he soon found that he was mistaken. Very early, next morning, he entered the town, and met the master of the slave, who was on the look-out for him, and who enquired what merchandise he was bringing for sale. "Aromatic wood," replied the merchant. "Aromatic wood!" cried his interrogator, "who could have advised you to bring wood of that description to our city? it is of so little value here, that it is in common use for fire-wood." "I have been told quite the contrary," said the merchant. "Whoever told it you, intended to deceive you," was the answer. The poor merchant was grievously mortified; and the rogue, pretending to take compassion upon him, said, "Come, now, I will take your whole stock, and give you in exchange for it a dish filled with any merchandise you like." The merchant, stupified by the information he had obtained from the stranger, was thrown off his guard, agreed to the bargain, and gave up his wood. He then went his way, and took up his lodgings at the house of an old woman, and accidentally inquired of her the price of aromatic wood. "It sells for its weight in gold," replied the old woman, "but let me warn you to mistrust

the inhabitants of this town, for they are rogues, whose only delight it is to make strangers their dupes." Mortified beyond measure at receiving this information too late, the merchant goes out to take a walk round the town, and meeting with three men at work, he remains awhile to watch them. One of them, suddenly addressing him, proposes a discussion, on condition that the one who is conqueror in the dispute shall oblige the other to perform any task he likes. The merchant accepts the proposal, they enter upon the discussion, and, overcome by his adversary, he is condemned to drink up the water of the sea. While he is expostulating with his opponent, and trying to get out of the scrape, another of the three men, who had lost one eye, and saw the merchant's eyes were of the same colour as his own, jumps up and says, "It is you who robbed me of my eye; come with me to the judge, that he may condemn you to restore the eye you have stolen." Fortunately, as they were dragging him away, they met the old woman with whom he lodged, who persuaded his persecutors to let him go till the next morning, and conducted him home. She there said to him, "I warned you that the people of this town would try to play you some trick; you did not pay proper attention, and have been

made a victim. Now there is only one way to escape. All the rogues acknowledge as their master a man who surpasses them all in knavery: and at night they go to visit him, and each relates to him what he has done in the course of the day. You must go and disguise yourself like one of them, and mix secretly among them, taking the greatest care not to let them recognize you. The rogues who have made a dupe of you will come in their turns to consult the master; listen attentively to his answer, and impress it deeply on your memory; for the objections which he will not fail to make to them, will furnish you with the means of eluding their snares." The merchant followed the old woman's advice, repaired to the spot indicated, and there saw among the first who arrived, the man who had cheated him of his merchandise. This man relates to the master of the rogues his affair with the stranger. "Have you specified," said the master, "the kind of merchandise which you are to give him in exchange?" "No," replied the man. "In that case," continued the master, "you have committed a serious inadvertence, for suppose that he should require of you to give him a plate-full of fleas, that half of these fleas shall be males and the other half females, and that some of them shall be yellow,

some black, and some blue, how would you procure them for him?" "Oh!" said the man, "this stranger is incapable of originating such an idea; if it comes to the worst, I shall escape with the loss only of a plate of gold or silver." Next came the man who had overcome the merchant in the dispute, and told his story to the master. "You, also," said the latter, "have made a blunder; for your adversary might say, 'I am ready to drink the waters of the sea, but begin by stopping up all the rivers and streams which run into it, after which I will fulfil my engagement.' You would be caught in your own trap." Last came the man with one eye, who told his master the trick he had played. "You have had no better luck than the others," said the master, "for the stranger may think of saying to the judge, 'The only means of knowing the truth is to take out an eye from each of our heads, and then weigh them; if they are of the same weight, the complaint is just, and my opponent will only have to take away the eye which he claims; but if either of the eyes be in the slightest degree heavier than the other, I demand that my opponent be punished, and be condemned to pay me damages and interest.' What would you do, if the stranger should make this proposal? The worst that could happen to

him would be to become blind of one eye, but you would become blind of both." "Such an idea could never enter into the merchant's head," replied the rogue. The assembly now separates, and the merchant returns to his lodging, having well impressed on his memory the three answers of the master of the rogues, which he uses next morning against the three men who had intended to make him their dupe, and he thus obliges them to pay him considerable sums of money to get out of the scrape.

This story is found in Syntipas and in the Parables of Sendabar. Its moral is not very apparent. The incident of the eye has some analogy with the story of the pound of flesh in the "Merchant of Venice."

The king, thus convinced of the innocence and talents of his son, sends for his wife, who confesses her crime. Cyrus then demands of his councillors what punishment he shall inflict upon her. They vary in their opinions; one proposes to cut off her feet and hands; another, to open her alive, and tear out her heart; a third, to cut off her tongue. The lady answers, by relating a tale of a fox, to show that it is better to live mutilated than to die. The cruel proposals of the councillors are rejected by the prince, who suggests that the guilty woman should have her head shaved, be

placed on an ass with her face turned towards the tail, and thus carried about the town, with two criers before her, to proclaim the nature of the crime for which she was so punished.

In the Parables of Sendabar, the young prince obtains the pardon of his enemy. In the Seven Viziers, she is thrown into the sea. The story of the fox is found only in Syntipas and the Parables of Sendabar.

The king is charmed with the wisdom of his son, and compliments his preceptor, who declares to him, that he is indebted to the star which presided over the birth of the young prince for the rapidity of his progress, and he relates a story (found only in the Greek Syntipas) to prove the infallibility of astrological predictions, and to show that the best education is thrown away upon a child born under an unpropitious star. The Greek romance ends with a conversation between the father and his son, in which the latter gives appropriate answers to a series of moral questions.

It will have been observed, in the course of the preceding analysis, that several of the stories in this collection were derived immediately from India, which gives support to the statement of Massoudi, that the book itself was originally com-

posed in that country. The Greek and Hebrew versions resemble each other closely, and were no doubt taken from one original. Many circumstances join in showing that the Hebrew could not have been taken from the Greek. The similarity, we may say, identity of the name, and the fact that its scene is laid in India, seem to show that it was taken directly from the book mentioned by Massoudi. M. Loiseleur Deslongchamps was of opinion that the History of the Seven Viziers is a more modern edition, or rather version, of the one alluded to by the Arabian historian just mentioned. In fact, this last collection contains several stories which are not found in the Greek or Hebrew versions.

(1.) The first of these is told by one of the viziers. A sultan, in the course of his walks, one day saw a child that had been exposed, and, moved with compassion, ordered that it should be taken home and educated. When the child had become a young man, and his education was completed, the emperor made him the keeper of his treasure. One day he sent him to fetch some object which was in the chamber of his favorite concubine. Ahmed (for so the youth was named) entering suddenly into the chamber, surprised the favorite in the arms of a slave, but he pretended

not to perceive them, and carried back to the sultan the object he wanted, without mentioning a word of what he had seen. The favorite, fearing that Ahmed would inform against her, lost no time in repairing to the sultan, and accused him of having attempted to offer her violence, and the prince in his anger determined at once to put his *protégé* to death. With this intention, he called a slave, and said to him, "Go to such a house, and wait there till a man comes to you and says, 'Accomplish the orders of the sultan.' When this man presents himself, cut off his head, and place the head in a covered basket, which thou shalt give to a second messenger." The slave goes to the place assigned; and the sultan gives the first commission to Ahmed, who has not the slightest suspicion of the accusation which has been brought against him, or of the fate which awaits him. On his way, he finds the slave, who is the accomplice of the favorite, drinking with his companions. The slave, who knows that Ahmed is acquainted with his criminal conduct, asks whither he is going, and tries to retain him, in the hope that the sultan would be irritated against him for his delay. Ahmed refuses, on account of the commission with which he is charged, and the slave offers to perform it for him. Accordingly, he repairs to

the house indicated by Ahmed, which he enters, and addressing the man whom he finds waiting there, says, "Accomplish the orders of the sultan," and in an instant his head is separated from his body. Ahmed himself, astonished that the slave does not return, follows him to the place where he had been sent, and receives from his executioner the basket which he is to carry to the palace. The sight of its contents leads to an explanation, and the guilty concubine is put to death.

A story, bearing a general resemblance to the above, was current in the west of Europe from the thirteenth century downwards. It occurs as a religious fabliau, or *conte dévot*, under the title,—*D'un roi qui voulut faire brûler le fils de son sénéchal* (see Legrand d'Aussy, *Fabliaux*, tom. v. p. 56); it forms the ninety-eighth chapter of the *Gesta Romanorum*; and it appears in the *Cento novelle antiche*, and in the *Novelle* of Giraldi Cinthio.

(2.) The story of a painter is related by the lady, to show the perversity of the men. A certain painter, who was of a very amorous disposition, fell in love with the portrait of a woman of surpassing beauty, and after many enquiries learnt that it was the portrait of a concubine of a vizier of Ispahan. He immediately left his home, and

repaired to that city, where he made acquaintance with an apothecary, and learnt from him that the sultan held sorcerers in the greatest detestation, and that he caused them all to be buried alive in a cavern situated at some distance outside the walls. This information suggested to the mind of the painter a stratagem which he immediately put into effect. During the night, he went to the vizier's palace, and succeeded in introducing himself into the apartment where the lady was asleep. He drew his dagger, and made a slight wound on her hand, on which she awoke, and terrified at the sight of a stranger, whom she supposed to be a robber, in her chamber, she gave him a magnificent veil, adorned with pearls and precious stones, on condition that he should leave her uninjured. Next day, the painter, in the disguise of a pilgrim, went to the sultan, and told him that the evening before, arriving at night-fall in the neighbourhood of Ispahan, he had been surrounded by four sorceresses, whom he had driven away by pronouncing the holy name of God; he added that he had struck one of them with his dagger on the hand, and that in her confusion and haste she had let fall a magnificent veil, which he had brought with him. The sultan at once recognized this as a present he had made to his vizier,

and the latter confessed having given it to his concubine. She was brought forth, and the wound discovered on her hand; and the sultan, convinced of her guilt, ordered her instantly to be buried in the cavern. The painter went privately to the keeper of the cavern, and by means of a bribe obtained possession of the lady, and carried her home with him.

This story is of Indian origin, and will be found with some variations in an Indian poem, analyzed in the *Quarterly Oriental Magazine* of Calcutta, June, 1827. I do not recollect any story closely resembling it in the Christian medieval collections, but it of course bears an analogy to the oft-recurring incident of ladies being thrown into a sleep resembling death in order that they may be buried and then carried off by their lovers. This is the incident on which is built the plot of the tale of Romeo and Juliet.

(3.) The fifth vizier tells a story of a young man who, after having wasted all his fortune, was obliged to gain his living by the occupation of a porter. One day, a venerable old man offered to take him into his service, adding, "We are ten old men who live together in the same house, and we have need of some one to wait upon us. I

would merely warn you, when you see us groan and weep, not to ask any questions." The young man observed, with the greatest attention, the condition thus imposed upon him, and rendered faithful service to the old men, who, in course of time, died one after the other, until he who had hired the youth was the only one left. When his last moments approached, his servant ventured to ask him to satisfy his curiosity, and he said, "My son, I have always loved you, and I feared lest you might incur the same lot as my own. Take care, above all things, that you never open the door which you see there." When he had said this, the old man breathed his last. The young man, now master of the house, gave way to his curiosity, and opened the forbidden door. After proceeding along a passage of considerable length, he found himself on the sea-shore, where a great white eagle suddenly seized upon him, and carried him over the waves to a distant island. He was there met by young damsels, who conducted him to their queen, who made him her husband. "My lord," she said to him, "all that is here belongs to you, but beware that your curiosity never leads you to open the door you see there, or you will bitterly repent of it." The young man passed seven months in pleasure and

rejoicing; at the end of which time his curiosity got the better of his discretion, he opened the door, and again found himself in a long passage which led him to the sea-shore, and the same eagle seized upon him, and carried him over the waters to his own house, where he was left a prey to the most poignant regret.

This is the history of the Third Calender in the *Arabian Nights.* M. Loiseleur Deslongchamps refers, for proof of its Indian origin, to stories in the *Vrihat-Kathâ* (*Quarterly Oriental Magazine* of Calcutta, January and June 1835) and to the *Hitopadesa* (Wilkins' translation, p. 129.)

(4.) The lady next tells the story of a merchant, who had a very handsome wife, of whom he was so jealous that he kept her always closely shut up. One day, the son of the sultan, passing that way, saw the lady, who was enjoying the air on terrace of her house, and was enchanted with her beauty. He tried to obtain entrance into the house, but in vain; upon which he sent her a letter fixed on the point of an arrow. This was favourably received, and he soon afterwards sent her another letter, containing a key, and informing her that it belonged to the lock of a coffer in which he intended to introduce himself into the house. The son of the sultan then went to his

father's vizier, and taking him into his confidence, prevailed with him to go to the merchant, and beg him, as a great favour to the prince, to receive into his house a coffer filled with objects of value, which he wished to place in safety. The stratagem succeeded; for the merchant, flattered by this mark of consideration, was far from objecting. The prince thus enjoyed the society of his mistress during seven days, at the end of which time, the sultan having asked for his son, the vizier sent a hasty message to the merchant to say that he was in immediate want of the coffer which had been intrusted to his care. The young prince was walking in the inner court of the house with his mistress, when the slaves came to fetch the coffer, and in his hurry to conceal himself, the lid was imperfectly fastened, so that in passing out of the house it sprang open, and the merchant discovered the trick which had been played upon him. In his mortification and despair, he divorced his wife, and resolved never to marry again.

This tale was known to the medieval *conteurs*. It is found under the title of *La Façon qu'une Juifve fut convertie à la foi de Jésus Christ par la poursuite amoureuse d'un jeune Romain*, in the *Comptes du Monde avantureux*, Paris, 1582; and in *Les délices de Verboquet le généreux*, Paris, 1623.

(5.) The following story is told by the sixth vizier. A young married lady, whose lover has been arrested and committed to prison, makes pressing solicitations for his delivery to the officer of the police, the cadi, the vizier, and the governor of the town, who are all charmed with her beauty, and make proposals, to which she readily listens, giving to each (unknown to the others) a *rendez-vous* at her own house. As they arrive, she shuts them up successively in a cupboard divided into compartments, pretending that she hears her husband coming, and in the sequel runs away in company with her lover. The husband, on his return, hears the voices from the cupboard, which he causes to be carried before the sultan; and being opened in his presence, the unlucky officers come forth covered with shame.

This story is found in Sanscrit (in the *Vrihat-kathâ*), in Persian, and in Arabic (in the *Thousand and One Nights*), with this difference that the lady is there represented as a virtuous woman, who takes similar means of exposing her importunate suitors. It appears in this, evidently its original shape, in an early French fabliau, entitled, *De la dame qui attrapa un prêtre, un prévôt, et un forestier* (Legrand d'Aussy, tom. iv., p. 246), and is found in an early English metrical tale, printed by Mr. Halli-

well, among the *Minor Poems of Lydgate*, p. 107, under the title of *The Tale of the lady Prioress and her three Suitors*.

(6.) Another tale, related by the lady, is that of a poor woman accused of having stolen the collar of a queen; she is thrown into prison, and treated with the greatest severity, until, fortunately, the sultan perceives one day a magpie holding the collar in its claws, when, perceiving at once the real thief, he causes the unfortunate woman to be set at liberty.

(7.) The last of the stories of the Seven Viziers, not found in Syntipas or the Parables of Sendabar, is the following. There was once a princess, named Rumta, who was so skilful in horsemanship and in throwing the javelin, that she declared she would marry no one but the prince who should vanquish her. Several had undertaken the task, but without success. Bharam, prince of Persia, passionately in love with Rumta, had failed by a stratagem of the princess, who, when she saw that she had to deal with a powerful adversary, had raised her visiere to dazzle her lover by the *éclat* of her beauty. Bharam, now in his turn, had recourse to stratagem. In the disguise of an old man, his face concealed in a great white beard, he

presented himself where the princess was passing, and asked one of her ladies to marry him, offering to give some rich jewels to the one who would agree to his proposal. "I will give my wife a kiss," said he, "and then I will be immediately divorced from her." The princess, amused at this singular proposal, ordered one of her ladies to accept it. And the same scene was repeated several days in succession; the pretended old man giving always a rich present of jewels to the lady who married him. At length Rumta herself takes a fancy to become, in her turn, the wife of the old man. Bharan, so soon as the marriage has taken place, throws off his disguise, and the princess resigns herself to her lot.

This story is also found in Sanscrit. It has an evident analogy with the classic legend of Hippomenes and Atalanta, which appears in the middle ages clothed in a very Gothic form. Somewhat similar stories are found in the romances of the Northern and Teutonic peoples.

Having thus analysed the Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic versions of this singular collection of stories, we come to the Latin "*Historia septem sapientum Romæ*," which appears to have been translated directly from the Hebrew, and which served

as the ground-work of all the other medieval versions. The translator has varied from his original, both in the names and in some of the stories, as will be easily seen by the following brief analysis. The hero of the story is here called Dioclesian, as in the English romance. He is the son of an emperor of Rome, named Pontianus, and, after his mother's death, is entrusted to the care of seven sages, who educate him in a retired spot, at some distance from the city. The young prince passes sixteen years in this retreat, and makes extraordinary progress in the sciences. In the meantime the emperor resolves to take a second wife, and marries the daughter of the king of Castille, who conceives the greatest hatred for the young prince, although she has never seen him; and, at her instigation, the emperor sends orders to the seven sages, on pain of death, to bring him to court on the festival of Pentecost, then approaching. The sages consult the stars, and they discover, by their astrological knowledge, that if they take home the prince on the day appointed, he will perish *mala morte*, the first word he speaks; and, that if they disobey the emperor's orders, they will have their heads cut off. The prince, also, has consulted the stars, and finds, that if he can abstain from speaking during the

seven days following the day appointed for his appearance at his father's court, his life will be saved. His teachers undertake to preserve him from harm during the seven days. Dioclesian accordingly repairs to the palace of his father, who is greatly astonished at finding his son dumb. The humour of the queen undergoes a change, and she suddenly becomes amorous of the young prince, persuades the emperor to entrust him to her charge, and makes advances, which the prince resists, and he declares his sentiments towards her in writing. Furious at her repulse, she disfigures her person, and accuses the youth of having attempted to offer her violence; whereupon, the emperor orders his archers to take him immediately to the gibbet. But the execution is delayed, at the representations of the sages, and Dioclesian is thrown into prison.

(1.) When the queen is alone with her husband, at night, she tells him the story of an old and beautiful pine, which the master of a garden causes to be cut down, in order to preserve a weak and ill-formed sprout. She says, that the lot of the old tree will be that of the emperor; and prevails with him to give directions for the execution of his son next morning.

In the English romance of the Seven Sages this

story appears also as the queen's first tale. In my text the tree is an apple-tree; in Weber's text it is a "pinnote-tre."

(2.) The first wise man, named Pantillas, (Paucillas?) persuades the emperor again to countermand his orders, by telling the tale of a knight, who slew the greyhound which had preserved the life of his child from a serpent.

This is the twelfth story in Syntipas, and was a very popular one during the middle ages. In our text of the English Seven Sages, the first sage is named Baucillas; in Weber's text the name is printed Bancillas.

(3.) At night the queen again changes her husband's intentions, by relating the story of a boar, which was so terrible that it killed all who passed through the wood where it lodged; and the emperor ordered it to be announced throughout his empire, that whoever would slay the boar should receive as a reward his daughter in marriage. A young shepherd watched the moment, when the animal was over-gorged with eating fruit, approached it cautiously, and slew it with a knife. The queen adds, that the seven sages are only deceiving the emperor, in order to encompass more easily his death.

This story appears to be taken immediately from the Parables of Sendabar. Its form in Syntipas, where it is the eleventh story, is different.—See before, p. 20. M. Loiseleur Deslongchamps thinks the writer had in his mind the old classic legend of the boar of Erymanthus.

(4.) The second sage, named Lentulus, saves the prince's life by the following story, intended to shew how prone women are to deceive. An old knight had for his wife a young lady, who, every night as soon as her husband was asleep, took the keys from under his pillow, and went to meet a young lover. The husband, waking one night, perceived that both his wife and his keys had vanished; and, going to the door, he found it open. He immediately bolted the door, inside, and took his station at the window, to await the lady's return. As soon as she appeared he loaded her with reproaches, to which she replied only by the humblest supplications that he would open the door to her. This the knight obstinately refused, and told her that she might remain, to be exposed on the pillory,—which was, in that country, the punishment of all who were found out of their houses after a certain hour of the night. The lady, finding that all her entreaties were ineffectual, threatened her husband that she

would drown herself; and instantly took up a large stone and threw it into the well. It was dark, and the knight imagined that his wife had thrown herself into the water. He immediately opened the door, and ran to the well, whilst his lady slipped into the house, and locked the door against him. The knight now prayed for admission, as urgently as the lady had done before, and with as little success. She went to bed; while he was seized by the watch, and, in due course, condemned to the pillory.

This story, which was very popular during the middle ages, was taken from the "Disciplina Clericalis" of Peter Alfonsi. It occurs as a fabliau, is inserted in the Decameron, and reappears in a variety of different forms. It is a singular proof of the long duration of the popularity of such stories, that within a few days I have heard the same story told in a small country town, as having happened to one of the townsmen, then dead, who had a scolding, unruly wife. She came home one night at an unseasonable hour, and he refused to admit her. They lived by the water-side; and, having threatened her husband that she would drown herself, unless he opened the door, she went and seized a log of wood, and threw it into the river. The good man believed that she had put her threat into execution; and, unlocking the door, ran to the water-side. The wife

immediately slipped into the house, locked the door after her, and left her husband to seek a lodging elsewhere. In our English versions this story is told by the third sage, who, in our text, (as in the Latin , is named Lentulus; in Weber's text, Lentilioun. In both the English texts the second sage is Ancillas, or Ancilles.

(5.) The queen again prevails upon her husband to order his son to be executed, by the following story of a father who sacrificed himself for his children. A knight, who had two daughters and a son, having entirely dissipated his fortune, penetrated, with his son, during the night, into the tower which contained the treasures of the emperor Octavian, and carried away a considerable quantity of gold. On the morrow the keeper of the treasure discovered the theft; and, perceiving a hole in the wall, placed under it a great vat filled with pitch and glue, and concealed it in such a manner that it could not be seen by any one entering through the hole. Some time after this, the old knight, having spent all the gold he had stolen, returned to the tower, and fell into the snare. When he saw that he had no chance of escape, he begged his son to cut off his head, in order that he might not be known. The young man obeyed him, with bitter lamentations, and carried away

the head, which he concealed in a ditch. In the morning the body was taken out of the vat, drawn through the city, and finally hung on a gibbet; and the emperor gave strict orders to the officer entrusted with the execution, to take notice if they heard lamentations in any house by which the body might pass. As was expected, when the body came by the house of the knight, his daughters burst into cries of loud grief; but their brother, not in the least disconcerted, inflicted a severe wound on his own body; and when the guards entered the house, he said that the lamentations of his sisters were caused only by the accident which had befallen him. The queen pointed out the unworthy conduct of the son, who threw his father's head into a ditch, instead of burying it in a churchyard, and who suffered his body to be suspended on a gibbet.

This story appears to be a medieval imitation of the legend of Rhampsinitus, king of Egypt, as told by Herodotus. A somewhat similar legend occurs in Pausanias, lib. ix. c. 37, relating to the treasury of Hyrieus. It recurs, under various shapes, in the medieval story-tellers from the thirteenth century to the sixteeth. In both the English texts of the Seven Sages it is, as in the Latin, the third tale of the empress.

(6.) The third sage, named in the Latin, Cato, again saves the prince's life, by relating the story of the magpie which discloses to its master the infidelities of his wife; who, in revenge, cast discredit on it by the strategem already related in the second story of Syntipas; and the husband, in his anger, puts the bird to death. The emperor is again convinced, by this story, that the words of a woman are not to be trusted.

This story is found in the Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic versions of the romance; but it is only in the Hebrew that the merchant is made to kill his parrot, which seems to be a proof of the Latin version having been founded upon the Hebrew. The change of the parrot for a magpie was natural enough. Weber's English text also calls the bird a magpie; whilst the text now printed restores the original name of a parrot or popinjay. It is the story of the fifth sage in the English texts.

(7.) The queen next tells a story of a king who was struck with blindness from heaven, to punish him for the bad government of seven sages, in whom he had placed all his confidence. By the advice of a child, named Merlin, the king cuts off the heads of the seven sages, and recovers his sight.

This story is found in the English versions, where it is the sixth story of the empress. It is of Indian origin, and is found in several of the Eastern collections of stories. Some of the incidents are identical with those of the common life of the Merlin of mediæval romance. In Weber's text of the English poem, the emperor is named Herod.

(8.) The fourth sage, named Malaquedrac, tells the story of a young woman married to an old knight, and in love with a priest. Wishing, before she yields herself to the priest, to try the patience of her husband, she causes a tree in the garden, which is his particular favorite, to be cut down; kills his favorite dog; and overthrows the table when he is treating his friends with a feast. The husband, under pretence of diminishing the superabundance of blood which torments her, bleeds her till she faints; and thus brings her to her reason. The sage praises the wisdom of the old knight, and advises the king to mistrust his queen.

This is also the story of the fourth sage in the English versions. He is called Malapas in our text. It also occurs as a fabliau; and is found, at a later period, among the *Contes ou nouvelles récréations et joyeux devis de Bonaventure des Périers*, num., cxxvii.

(9.) The queen makes answer to this tale by one of the magician Virgil, who, among other very wonderful performances, had, by his art, produced a fire which burnt always, and near which were two fountains; one warm, where the poor bathed; the other cold, of which they drank. Between the fire and the fountains was a statue, with an inscription on its forehead to the effect, that it would take vengeance on the person who should strike it. One day a certain scholar, who could not imagine how a statue could take vengeance on any one who should strike it, gave it a great blow, on which the fire was instantly put out, and the fountains ceased to flow. Virgil had also built a tower, on the top of which he had placed as many "images" as there were provinces of the Roman empire. Each of these images, or statues, was made by magic, and held in its hand a bell, which it rang when the province it represented was preparing to revolt; and the Romans immediately took arms to punish it for its disobedience. Certain kings, who wished to throw off the yoke of the Romans, entered into a conspiracy to destroy the wondrous tower. They sent four knights to Rome, who succeeded in persuading the emperor Octavian that all the treasures of Virgil were hidden under this tower. The emperor fell

into the snare, and gave them authority to dig under the tower, during the night, which they so managed, that the tower, with its statues, fell to the ground, and were destroyed. On the morrow, the Roman populace, furious at the disaster, seized upon the person of their emperor; and, to punish him for his cupidity, poured melted gold into his mouth, and buried him alive. According to the explanation given by the queen to this story, the tower and its images represented the emperor's body and five senses, which his son and the seven sages were plotting to destroy.

The details of this story differ in the two English versions. In both a mirror is substituted for the images. In our text the name of Merlin is substituted for that of Virgil; and the history of the mirror alone is given. The story of Virgil's tower, which was called *salvatio Romæ*, holds rather a conspicuous place in the legendary history of the magician. Such a tower is first mentioned, but without the name of Virgil, in a Latin manuscript of the eighth century, in a passage published by Docen, and republished by Keller, in his Introduction to the *Sept Sages*. Vincent of Beauvais, in the thirteenth century, (and therefore subsequently to the compilation of the Latin romance of the *Historia septem sapientum*), describes Virgil's tower; and it is the subject

of a chapter in the legendary history of Virgilius. The conclusion of the story seems to be taken from a traditionary remembrance of the history of Crassus, whose head was cut off by the Parthians, and molten gold poured into his mouth, to satiate his avarice. The story was, at a later period, taken from the *Historia septem sapientum*, and inserted, with great modifications, into the *Pecorone* of Ser Giovanni.

(10.) Next day the fifth sage, named Joseph, tells the story of the learned physician, "Ypocras," or Hippocrates, who,—according to the medieval legend,—jealous of the knowledge of his nephew, Galien (Galen), treacherously murdered him, and died himself soon after of sorrow for the deed. The sage threatens the emperor with a similar fate if he puts his son to death.

This is the story of the second sage, in the English versions. It appears to be peculiar to this collection of tales.

(11.) The next story told by the queen consists, as has been observed by M. Loiseleur Deslongchamps, of two distinct episodes. The first is the story of a king, swollen and disfigured, who employs his seneschal to find him a fair lady, for a reward of a thousand florins; and the steward,

incited by his covetousness, brings the king his own wife, whom he keeps, and the steward flies into banishment.

In the second episode, the same king lays siege to Rome, demanding that the bodies of St. Peter and St. Paul should be delivered up to him. There were in Rome, at that time, seven sages, who undertook to defend the city during seven days. The six first days they succeeded, by their discourses, in preventing the king from making an attack; but he was determined to assault the city on the seventh day, when the last sage, by a cunning stratagem, spread terror among the assailants, who took to flight; and their king, and the greater part of his knights, were slain in the pursuit. The queen warns her husband, that his seven sages will be as injurious to him, by their tales, as the seven sages in the story were to the king who invaded Rome.

These two episodes become separate stories, both placed in the mouth of the queen, in the English versions. In the Latin they seem to recal to mind the Oriental original, in which each person told two stories. The first of them is, in the English text, the seventh in order. It was of Indian origin, and is found in the Greek and Hebrew collections. At a later period it passed into the *Novellino* of Mas-

succio, (printed in 1552); and it is also found in the *Contes du Monde Aventureux*, (Paris, 1582).

The second episode is the thirteenth story of the English versions, where the circumstances are modified.

(12.) The sixth sage, named Cleophas, tells the story of a woman who promised, separately, to three of the emperor's knights, that they should pass the night with her; and each engages to give her a hundred florins as the price of her favours. After having received the sums agreed upon, the woman causes her three suitors to be murdered by her husband, as they enter the house; and she employs her brother to throw the body of one of the knights into the sea. When the brother returns, she persuades him that the body has come back to the house; and, twice the dupe of the same deceit, he carries away the three bodies, supposing them to be all one, and burns the last in the middle of a wood, to make sure that it shall not return again. But scarcely has he reduced the body to ashes, when a knight, led by his evil star, passes by, and approaches the fire to warm himself. The man supposes it is the dead knight returning, pushes him into the fire, and he also is burnt. Some time after this, the woman, in a fit of rage, accuses her husband of the triple

murder, and both receive due punishment for their crime.

This story is found in the Hebrew version, but not in the Greek or Arabic. It is omitted in the French metrical version, and in the English versions, but is inserted in the English compilation of the *Gesta Romanorum*, and occurs as a fabliau, under the title of *Les trois bossus*. The fabliau of *Estourmi* turns also on a somewhat similar plot. The story of *Les trois bossus* is also found in the collection of Straparola, from whence it seems to have been derived into the *Contes Tartares* of Gueulette. The Hebrew story runs somewhat as follows. A woman introduces into her house three hump-backed musicians, who drink till they become drunk. She hears her husband at the door, and conceals them hurriedly in a place full of holes and traps, into which they fall, and are strangled. When her husband is gone, she opens the door to relieve them from their hiding-place, and is in despair at finding them all dead. The servant calls a black slave; and the lady promises to yield to his embraces, if he will rid her of the bodies. This he agrees to do; and immediately carries them away, and throws them into the river. It is probable that the printed text of the Hebrew version is an imperfect one; and that, originally, the story ended in the same manner as in the *Historia Septem Sapientum*.

(13.) The queen next tells a story of a king who was so jealous of his wife that he kept her closely shut in his castle, and always carried about with him the keys of her apartment. It happened that a knight of a distant country saw the lady in a dream, and fell in love with her; and he resolved to travel about until he discovered the object of his passion. At the same time, the queen also dreamt that she saw the knight, with whose appearance she was no less struck. After having wandered through several kingdoms, the knight arrived at length in that of the jealous king, and, passing under the tower in which she was shut up, he saw at a window the lady of whom he was in search. He presented himself to the king, who made him his steward; and he became so great a favourite of his new master, that he soon obtained permission to build himself a dwelling near the castle. In building this house, the knight caused a subterranean passage to be made, leading into the chamber of the lady in the tower; and, to hinder his secret from being discovered, he put to death the workman who had made it. By means of this passage he obtained frequent interviews with the queen. One day, while the king and his steward were hunting together, the king recognized on the knight's finger a ring which he had formerly given to the queen. It was, in fact,

a present she had made to her lover. The steward perceived that the king had taken notice of his ring, and, on his return, passed in haste through the subterranean passage, and restored it to the queen. The king also hastened to the queen's apartment, to see if his suspicions were well-founded, but was surprised to find that she had still in her possession the ring he had given her. A short time after this, the knight told the king that a beautiful lady, his mistress, had come from his own country to find him; and that he had prepared a banquet, at which he invited the king to be present. The latter, on his arrival, was astonished at the great similarity between his steward's mistress, and his own wife,—for the knight had introduced the queen by means of the subterranean passage. He hastened back to the castle after dinner; but the subterranean passage offered a shorter road, and he found his wife in her chamber in her ordinary attire. The king was now so entirely thrown off his guard, that he was made to be a witness of the marriage of the two lovers, giving the lady with his own hand; and the knight, who had a ship ready, set sail with his prize. When the king retired to his castle, he no longer found the queen in her chamber. The queen, in the romance before us, advises her husband not to let himself be

the dupe of his sages, as the king in the story had been that of his seneschal.

This story appears to be taken from some Eastern collection, for a similar one is found in Von Hammer's supplementary stories of the *Thousand and One Nights*. It, however, bears an evident analogy to the plot of the *Miles Gloriosus* of Plautus, from which, perhaps, it was indirectly derived. It occupies the same position in the English texts as in the Latin.

(14.) The story told by the seventh master, Joachim, is only a disfigured copy of the well-known tale of the matron of Ephesus, which reappears under a great variety of different forms in the literature of the middle ages.

(15.) The young prince, on the eighth day, can speak with safety; and he tells a long story of a youth, named Alexander, who was endowed with the knowledge of the language of birds. Hearing one day the nightingale, he told his father that the bird predicted that he should eventually rise to so high a position in the world, that his father would humbly offer him water to wash his hands, and that his mother would, with equal humility, hold the towel to wipe them. The father was enraged at this prognostic, took his son out to sea in a boat, and threw him into the deep. The child, however, swam until he was taken up

by a vessel bound for Egypt, where having, for the satisfaction of the king, interpreted the cry of two ravens, he obtains, as a reward, the hand of his daughter, and, after her father's death, succeeds him to the crown of Egypt. Before his marriage he visits the court of the emperor, where he goes through the same adventures as those which form the plot of the beautiful, and once popular, romance of *Amis and Amiloun*. After Alexander became king of Egypt, he sent for his father and mother, and the prophecy of the nightingale was accomplished.

In the English versions, as in the old French metrical version, all the portion of the story taken from the romance of *Amis and Amiloun* is omitted. The story is found in the *Cento novelle* of Sansovino (Giorn. viii. nov. 4), and among the novels of Lope de Vega, *El pronostico cumplido*.

After the prince has told his story, the queen is brought to judgment, and condemned to be burnt alive, along with a boy who had been discovered, in disguise, among her chambermaids. The latter incident is not found in the English version. Sometime after this, the emperor dies, and his son Dioclesian succeeds him.

The preceding hasty sketch will show the history of the romance before it took its English

dress, and will exhibit, in some measure, the materials of which it was formed. Various versions and imitations appeared at a later period until it took the humble form of a chap book, under the title of *The Seven Wise Masters*. The order and form of the tales in this collection shew that it had come directly, or indirectly, from the Latin version. The *Seven Wise Mistresses* is a very paltry imitation of it. There were also later imitations of the same romance, in the East, such as the *Forty Viziers* of the Turks, and the history of Prince Bakhtyar and the ten Viziers.

The two English metrical versions are altogether different compositions; but they contain the same stories, in the same order, and were evidently translated from the same original, which appears to have been different from the French metrical version published by Prof. Keller. There is also an early French prose version, published by M. Leroux de Lincy, which resembles more the French metrical version than the Latin text. The variations in the English text will be best shewn by the following table of its contents, with comparative indications of the same tales as found in the Greek, Latin, and French metrical version, the references in the first columns being to the numbers affixed to the foregoing analysis of the different collections. It will be seen, that

four only of the stories found in the Eastern original are retained in the medieval romance built upon it.—

Contents of the English version.	Syntipas.	Latin.	French.	Page of the present volume.
1. The tree and its branch . . .	—	1	1	21
2. The knight and his greyhound .	12	2	2	26
3. The boar and the herdsman . .	11	3	5	32
4. Ypocras and his nephew . . .	—	10	4	36
5. The robber of the treasury . .	—	5	9	41
6. The husband shut out	—	4	6	46
7. The king and his steward . . .	9	11	3	52
8. The old man and his wife . . .	—	8	8	57
9. Merlin's pillar	—	9	13	64
10. The burgess and his parrot . .	2	6	10	73
11. The emperor and Merlin . . .	—	7	11	78
12. The sheriff, his widow, & the knight	—	14	12	84
13. The seven clerks of Rome . . .	—	11	7	90
14. The two dreams	—	13	14	94
15. The ravens	—	15	15	106

The manuscripts of the English romance of the Seven Sages are not common, although, as has been already observed, we find two distinct versions. The one here given to the public is printed from a manuscript in the Public Library of the University of Cambridge, (known by the shelf-mark, *Dd.* 1. 17), which appears to have been written about the end of the fourteenth century. The other version was printed by Weber (*Metrical Romances*, vol. iii.) from copies preserved in the celebrated Auchinleck MS. at Edinburgh, and in MS. Cotton, Galba, *E.* ix. Another copy,

much mutilated, of this version, but presenting many readings different from Weber's edition, is preserved in a MS. in the Public Library of the University of Cambridge, *Ff.* ii. 38. The following lines will serve as a specimen :—

"THE SEVYN SAGES."—[folio 126.]

"Some tyme ther was a noble man,
Whos name was clepyd Dyaclysyan,
Of ryche Rome and that honour
Lorde he was and emperour.
An emperyce he had to wyfe,
The fayrest that myghte bere lyfe,
A feyre lady, and a gente.
Hur name was clepyd dame Ilacent.
A man chylde they had betwene them two,
The fayrest that myghte on erthe goo,
That was to them bothe lefe and dere.
Lysteneyth now and ye may here:
So hyt befelle upon a day
The emperyce syke sche lay;
Soche an evylle was come hur upon,
That sche myȝt nodur ryde nor goon,
Nor she myȝt no lenger leve
For drynkys that lechys myȝt hur geve.
Now ys sche dedd, and wende hur way,
God hur sowle yuge may
Odur to peyne, or to blysse,
Whedur that hys wylle ys!

Let we now that lady dwelle,
And of the emperour y wylle yow telle.
Thys emperour waxe olde and hore,
And thought to sett hys sone to lore,
And comawndyd anon before hym to come
.vii. of the wyseste clerkys of Rome.
Now lordyngys, he seyde, gente,
Aftur yow .vij. y have sente;
I wylle my sone betake yow,
To lerne hym wytt and vertue;
Whyche of you dar my sone undertake,
To lerne hym that that ys wreton yn the letters
blake.

* * * *
* * *

Thorow councelle of hys bolde barons,
He weddyd a wyfe of grete renowns;
Thorow covetyse of erytage
They made soon the maryage,
Sythen aftur yn lytulle space
Befelle a fulle wondur case.
Let we now alle thys dwelle,
And of the .vii. maysters y wylle yow telle.
Thes .vii. clerkys there they stode
Wolde wete yf the chylde cowde ony gode,
And wete yf hys wyttys were feyre and clere
That he had lernyd that .vii. yere.
The chyldys bedd was made on lofte
Fulle esyly and fulle softe.

They toke levys syxtene,
.....that were rounde and grene,
.....hede for sothe to say,
.....ys and went ther way.
.....chylde to hys reste,
.....that the day was preste,
.....tyrs seven."

* * * * *

The MS. from which the present text is printed is very incorrectly written; and, in several instances, I have been obliged to correct the mere errors of the scribe, such as *and* for *an*, and the like; but this has been done very sparingly. In all instances where the scribe has thrown the *n* of the article to the next word beginning with a vowel, I have restored it to its proper place: thus the MS. has *a nayer* for *an ayer*, l. 7; *no nothir* for *non other*, 478, 630, &c.; *a nax* for *an ax*, 613; *a nolde mane* for *an olde*, 2708. According to a common practice in old MSS. two words are sometimes written in one, in which case I have always separated them: thus, the MS. has *atese*, l. 1996; *aston*, 1930.

THE following text of the Seven Sages, one of the most remarkable collections of stories current during the Middle Ages, is printed from a MS. in the Bibl. Publ. Cantab. (known by the shelf-mark Dd. 1, 17), which appears to have been written about the end of the fourteenth century. It is an incorrectly-written MS., but is the only copy known which has not suffered mutilation. An Essay on the history of these stories, with a few notes on the text, will form another of the Society's publications, to be bound with the text at the end of the year; and for that I reserve further observations on the subject.

THE SEVEN SAGES.

In Rome was an emperour,
A man of swyth mikil honur,
As the book tellys us,
Is name was Deocclicius,
Al the londe hadde to gye,
And hadd a wyfe that hight Helie.
Bitwene thaym twa come an ayer,
A good child and a faire;
The emperour and is wif
Lovenden the child as hare lyf.
The emperour wax an old man,
And on a day thynke he gan
Uppon his sone that was so bolde,
And was bot sevene wyntur olde.
The emperour for-thoght sore
Tha the child ware sette to lore;
After the seven sages he sent,
And messangers anon thare went,
And broghten the clerkes of honour
Ryght byfore the emperour.

Into a chambir out of the halle
He toke thaym, and refreynde alle,
Whilk of thaym he myght take
Hys sone a wyes man to make.
The heldest answerde the emperour,
That whas a man of mykil honour,
A lene oor man he was,
Kyd was callid Baucillas;
He sayed to the emperour,
"Woldestow do me that honour,
To bytake thy sone to me,
Thow scholdest bath here and see,
Er thys seven ȝer ware a-goon,
He sholde conne hym self al on,
By God Almighty that is in heven,
Also mykyl as we sevene."
The secunde mayster was nawt so holde
Ase Baucillas, no nawt so bolde;
A man he was that loved pees,
And whas callid Ancillees.
"Sire emperoure, ȝif it so bee
Thow wille bytake thy sone to me,
For thy love I wille hym teche,
Into his hert fort reche
Al the clergy undir sonne
That we seven clerkes cunne.
This I wile sikere the,
Gyf he schal byleve with me."
The thirde a lene man was,

And couthe mykil solas,
And was callid Lentulus:
Hee sayed to the emperour thus,
"Sire emperour, take nowt a-greef,
Tak me thy childe that is te leve,
And er ther passe thre and fyve,
Yf he have wyt and his on lyve,
He schal conne hym self alone
As mykil wit as we ilkone."
The fyrde mayster he roos and spake,
He was nowthir whyit no blake,
And inred man he was,
And was callid Maladas;
"Sire," he sayde, "take me thyn heire,
That his bothe good and faire;
Bote for sothe I wile for-sake
That my felawes hase undirtake:
A wondir thyng that were bygyne
To teche hym that my felawes cune.
Bot I walde teche hym, as I am a man,
Also mykil good as I can."
The fyfte mayster up araes,
That of wisdom bare grete loos,
He was boren in Rome toune,
And was callid mayster Caton;
He sayd, "Sire emperour, i-wis,
The sothe tale that his this,
To teche hym that my felawes cane,
A grete foly it were bygyne;

Bote yf thow wilt bitake hym me,
I wille, for honour of the,
As I am trewe mane,
Hym teche the clergy that I can."
  The sexte was a ȝong man
That no berd non bygane,
And sayed, " Sire, bythoght fening,
Take thy sone in my kypyng,
And that wole do so by myn attente,
That ȝe no schal nouȝt repente."
In this manere answerde he,
And was callid maystir Jess.
  The sevent mayister answerd thus,
And was hoten Marcius:
" Sire, I have servyd the ȝare,
Sythen I couthe first of lare,
Fram that day hidyr to,
Al that evere I have done
I queth ȝou, sire emperoure;
Woltow do me that honour,
To take me thy childe to ȝeme,
And I wille teche hym the to greme."
  The emperour with wordis stille
Thaynked thaym with good wille;
" By the deth that I schal dee,
I nylle party ȝoure company,
I nylle take my sone to one,
I bytake hym ȝow ilkone,
To teche hym in chambyr and in halle,

That I be holden to ȝou alle."
Thay thanked alle the emperour,
That grauntyd hem that honour,
To have in hare kepyng
That he loved thorou al thyng.
Thay token leve at the emperour,
And ladde the childe with honour,
The sevene mayster alle y-fere,
Ther the childe schulde lere.
Than sayd maystir Catone,
"Yf he dwelle here in the toune,
Certes it may nought be
That he schal here or see
Wylen to don or speke with mouthe,
And that nolde we nought that he couth.
Sykyrly for to telle,
There most he nouȝt dwelle."
The seven maysteres thay hym nome
I note how mykil out of Rome,
For to ordayne and dyvise,
Or the childe ware sette aprise,
Ware thay myȝte a stude make,
A real, for the childes sake,
Whare he myght of wit lere,
And none vileny heere.
A studie thay fonden swyth fayre,
And a stude of good eeir;
Fayre welles there wellyde fast,
And fayre trees schadow to kast.

In the fayrest place of alle
They lete reren a halle;
Nought as anothir halle it nas,
Even four cornarde it was.
Thay late rere in ilce a syde
Fayre chambirs many and wyde;
Every mayster hadde oone
In to lygge and to goon.
Than al togydir was wrought,
Er the childe wer thydir brought,
Fyrst gamen to bygynne,
The sevene sciens payent therin.
Whan al togydyr was wrought,
The childe thar-in was brought,
Amyd the halle hys bede was made,
When he lay ther-in naked,
Hon ilce half he myȝt byholde
At ilke tyme whane he wolde,
Uppon the wallis he myght see
What hys lesson schulde bee.
Alle hys maystirs were about,
To teche hym, for hys fadir dout;
Evermore wil he wooke,
When on levede, anothir tooke,
That or the sevene ȝere were-goon,
Of seven artis nastir noon
That he no couthe good skil inne,
Wastir noon to bygynne.
Whan his maystirs taught noght,

He lernede of his owen thoght;
That on a day in the halle
He disputide with ham alle,
And thay were glad of that he couthe,
And sayed ilcon with othir to mouthe,
"The childe wax a wyes man;
Prove we more what he can."
Thay were bythout in a wile
For to do the childe a gyle,
For to prove of hym more,
How depe he was in lore.
The childes bede was maked in stage,
Of four postis as a kage;
Undir ilc post thay layden,
Aste the clercus hem selven sayden,
Four yven leves togydir knyt,
For to proven of his wit.
Uppon morwen, tho it was day,
The childe awakid there he lay,
He loked low, he loked hee,
And kast wildeliche his hye;
He loked in ilce half of his bede,
As a man thot ware adrad.
Than come the maystir Baucillas,
And askyde the childe what him was:
"Wy lokesttow so aboute thy bede?
Artou of eny thyng adrade?"
The childe answerde in his bede,
"I am of no man adrade;

Bote a lytil I merveyle me
Of a thyng that I see.
This house that is so strange dyȝt,
The rofe hys sonkon to nyght,
Or the flore his resyn on hye,
Sythen I last the rofe see."
"Certys," quod Maladas,
"That ware a wondir kas!
For in noone kynne wyse,
The flore ne may nouȝt aryse.
The post been grete and nouȝt smal,
How myȝte the rofe awale?
Hyt ne may on non wys be,
Thyng that thow tellyst me."
"By God, maister, I am noght dronken,
Yf the rofe his nouȝt sonken,
Ne the flore rysyn on hye,
Sithen I last the rofe see,
Than his my bede undir-layede;
That no may nouȝt bee wyt-sed."
Thay nolden no langer with hym ȝede,
Ne suffry langer lygge in bede.
Bote while he wente in solas,
Maden the bedde as hit was:
Ilkon sayed to other thus,
"He his a wyse man y-wys."
Wyl the childe at scole was,
Hym byfel a harde caes;
Hys modir deyde, that hatte Elye,

As we schalle alle dye.
Sone aftir that scho was dede,
Hys fadir hadde anothir rede;
Grete lordis of honour
Come anone to the emperour,
And sayden, "Thow hase londis y-now;
Hit were tyme for to wouwe,
And to have anothir wyf,
For to ledde with thy lif,
Thou ne havest no childe bot hon,
And mygtyst susteyne many oon."
The emperour was jolyf of blode,
And hare councel undirstood;
And to thaym alle sayede hee,
"Lordyngs, thanne aspye ȝe
A womman worthy to be my make,
And with ȝoure consel I wil hire take."
Tho thay seen he wolde acente,
For to seche anon thay wente,
Of hye lynage and faire manere
A lady for to be his feere.
Alle the lordis soghten fast,
And fande a lady at the last.
At schorte wordis for to telle,
The emperour ne wolde nouȝt dwel,
Hee wedded hirre ase the law was,
And lyveden togydir in solas.
Bot it lastid bot a while,
The wyf for-dide hit with a gyle.

The emperasse was sone tolde
Of that child that was so bolde,
That was the emperour eir,
A good childe and a faire.
He that tolde hire that tale,
Broght hir in mykil bael;
For ever more scho was in thoght,
That the childe were to deth broght.
In a myry morny[n]g of May,
The emperour in his bedde lay,
And the emperesse in feere;
What we saye now non schal here.
"Sire," scho sayed, "hit is me tolde,
That thou hase a sone bolde,
A good childe and a faire,
That sal be oure bothe ayere.
For sothe, sire, I hold hym myn,
Also wel as thou dost thyn.
Therefore I besyche the,
For love thou ouwest to me,
Send after hym, yf it his thy wylle,
And late me spek with hym my fylle:
Graunt my bone, and make me glade,
Hyt his the first that ever I badde."
The emperour lay al stille,
And lete hyre saye al hire wille;
Of falsnesse non heed he nam,
Bot at the last out hit kame.
The emperour answerde tho,

"Certis, dame, I have no mo,
No child bot hym i-wis;
And now I wot how hit his
That thow desyres hym to see,
He schal come hom to the."
The lady sayed thare,
"Leve sire, this ilke daye
Lat dyght messangers ȝare,
Aftir hym for to fare."
Quod the emperour, and swor ther-to,
"For soth, dame, hit sal be doon."
Bot the emperour wist nought
What was hire wikkyd thought.
An evyl deth mot scho dey!
Scho purchasede thourugt nigremancye,
That seven dayes and seven nyght
He no schold spek with no wyght,
Yf ony word hym hadde sprong,
That men myght here of his tong,
Anon hys hert scholde to-breke,
Ne schold he never eft more speke.
This hadde the wikkid womman wrout,
For brynge the childe to nowt.
Than messangers were ȝare,
After the childe for to fare:
He sayed to the messangeres,
That ware bolde and feres,
"To the seven sages ȝe sal wynde,
And saye that I ham gretyng sende,

And bidde thaym withouten delay
Come withinne the thyrdde day,
And bryng with thaym my sone dere
That thay have for to lere."
Thay nolden there longe dwelle,
The messangers were ful snelle,
Hastilich the way thay nomen,
To the seven sages thay comen,
And sayden, "Clerkis of honour,
Wylle ȝow gretis the emperour,
And byddis ȝow within this thrid day
Come to hym, without delay,
And bryng with ȝow his sone dere,
That he betaught ȝou to lere."
Thay were resayved with gret honour,
For love of the emperour.
The childe and his maisters alle
Went dowen out of halle
Into a herber to make solas,
And there sawe a wondir kas;
Hit neght fast toward nyght;
And the mone schone wil bryght,
And thay byhelden towarde the scky,
Uppon the mone that so hyȝe,
And on sternes there bysyde,
Of thyng that affter wolde bytyde.
Than byspake maystir Caton,
"Felaus, I see in the mone,
We have made us alle to-don.

The emperour hase send us sonde,
That we schal brynge his sone alle to honde;
And when he comes his fadir byfore,
And he speke he his lore,
His stepmodir hase thorug nigrimancye
So demed how the child schal dye,
Yf he speke he his y-lore;
And we schal by schend ther-fore.
The emperour, by swete Jhesus!
Alle he wille wyten us."
The childe kast hys heyn a-hey,
And sawe alle that Caton see;
"Maystir," he sayde, "a! see ȝe
Another thyng that I se?
In a stere I see me lyche,
And I myghte forbere speche
Seven dayes and seven nyght,
I scholde covere agayn my syght,
And my woo turne to game,
And ȝe alle out of blame."
Than sayd mayster Baucillas,
"For soth this his wondir cas:
Tharefore take counsel sone
What his best to don,
How we myghte overcome this wyf,
For to save oure aler lyf.
For bettir be avisemend,
Certenlych we be schent."
The childe answerd ther he stood,

"I wyle gyf ȝou counsel good;
Seven dayes I mot forbere
That I ne gyf no answere;
And yf I speke loude or stille,
With the forme word I sal deye.
And ȝe both, ȝe maistires sevene,
The wysesde I holde undir evene,
Fondys ilkon, yf ȝe may,
For to holde my lyf a day
With qweyntys of clergye;
For ȝe be schent yf I deye."
Baucillas sayed, "If I may,
I schal save thy lyf a daye."
And alle the othir sayed, i-wys,
That ilkon wolde be for hys,
And ilc mayster toke hys day
To kepe hit, withouten delay.
Sonenday hadde Baucillas;
And ilkon wyst wylk his was.
Thus thay were at on alle,
And wenten agayen into the halle,
And maden the messangers solas,
And ȝede to bede wan tym was.
O morwe, when the day was lyght.
Thay hyeden that the childe were diȝt,
He went forth in mykil care,
And left alle hys maysters thare;
With hym toke he nevere oon,
Bot maistir Baucillas aloon.

And anon, are the none,
Ryght to the cité of Rome
The childe into palayes kame,
And into halle the way he name.
And hys fadir he gan lowte
And the lordyngs al abowt.
  Hys fadir askyd how he ferde,
And the child nowt answerde,
But lowtid to his fadir anon,
And stod stille as a stoon.
  The emperour than wroth was,
Spake to the maystir Baucillas,
"Mayster, how his this game goone,
That my sone speke wordis noone?
And tho I hym bytoke to ȝow
He spake langage good i-nowe,
And now ne spakys he bettir no wors:
Therefore have Godys curse."
  "Sire," quod maystir Baucillas,
"For soth hit his a wondir cas:
ȝyster day he spak as wel
As ony of us, by saynt Myghel."
  Wyle the emperour and Baucillas
Spake of that wondir cas,
To the emperesse the worde was broght,
That the childe ne spake noght.
Scho come a-doun into the halle,
And hyre maydens with hire alle,
And welkomede the childe anone.

And he stod stille as a ston,
And fayre he gan the lavydy loute,
And hir mayden alle aboute.
He stod stille and spake noughte:
He wist ful wille hir wikyd thouȝt.
The lavedy sayed to the emperour,
"Y grette thy sone for gret honour,
And hys mouth whas fast stoke,
He wolde never a word speke."
Thanne sayede the emperour,
"Dame, by saynt Saviour,
He wolde nothyng spek with me,
How scholde he, dam, spek with the?"
The lavedy sayd, that thouȝt gile,
"Sire, lete us twayne bee a wyle
In a chambir togidir steke,
And certis, yf he sal ever speke,
I sal make hym speke, i-wys,
Yf anny speche in hym ys:
For soth I shal bee his leche,
Yf ever more shal have speche."
The emperour of alle the londe
Tok hys sone by the honde,
And sayed, "Dame, take hym here,
And wende wydir ȝe wille i-fere;
I vowch hym wylle save on the,
To do what thy wylle bee."
The emperesse of alle the londe
Tok the childe by the honde,

And wente into a chambyr i-fere,
And ful evyly, as ȝe mowe hyre,
Ful sone scho hadde a lesyng wrouȝt,
For to bryng the childe to nouȝt.
When scho into the chambur cam,
The childe by the honde scho nam,
And sayed to hym, "Lemman dere,
Men wenes I be thy faderes fere:
By hym that made sone and mone,
He ne hade nevere with me done,
No nevere more he ne schal;
My body, maydenhod and alle,
I have tokyn hyt to the,
To do with what thy wille bee."
The childe stod and spake nought,
And was in swyth gret thought.
Aboute hys neke hyre armees ho layed,
And with hir fals tonge sayed,
"Kys me, yf thy wylle bee,
Alle my lyfe hys longe on the."
The childe thouȝt on hevene blys,
He nolde nought the lavedy kys,
And non othir thynge do,
Bot crepe out of hire armes two.
Anon as the lady see,
Out of hire armes that he flee,
Al that on hir hed was layed
Scho brayd hit a-don at on brayd,
To-rente hyre clothes and foule ferde,
And cryde at the emperour herde;

For men scholde tak hed,
Scho made hyre vysages for to bled.
Than the emperour herde hyr crye,
Into the chambir he gan hye;
And anon has he cam,
A grete scryke up ho nam,
And sayde, "My lord, syre emperour,
Lo hyre what a grete honour
Thy sone walde have done the,
Here he walde have strangyl me,
Or he walde have lyen my by,
Bot I hadde areryd cry.
For soth he nys nouȝt thy blode;
Hit his a devel, and his wode:
For sothe, bot he be bondon anon,
He wil schende us ilc oon."
The emperour was nere wode,
When he sawe hys wyfys bloode,
Hire heved bare, hire clothes rente;
He swore anon, by saynt Vyncent,
"I schal nevere hete brede,
Here the thyfe traytour by dede."
Anon ryght the emperour
Callid to hym a tormentour,
And anothir, and the thyrde,
And sayde, "I ȝow hote and byde,
Take thys thyf, and bynde hym fast,
Whyle the cordis wyle laste,
And ledis ȝe hym thare thyfys hyng,
Anon that he have hys endyng;

And loke that he no tarye nouȝt,
Er he be to deth brought."
None durste wyth-sytte hys heste,
Nouthir the lest no the moste.
Thay tokyn hym, and bandyn hym fast,
Whyle the cordis wolde laste,
Thourth the emperours commandement,
Thay laddyn hym toward juggement.
Knyghtys and levedys in the halle,
Squyers and maydens alle,
Hadde wondire in hir thouth
What wo was in the chambir wrought.
Erlys and barrons in the halle
Wenton to the emperour alle,
And sayed, "Lord, syr emperour,
Thow doost thy selfe lytil honour,
For to suffyre thy sone by slawe,
Withouten any proses of lawe.
Lat hym leve al this nyght,
Til to morwe that day by lyght,
And than yf he schal by schent,
Lat hym passe thourgh juggement."
Than answerde the emperour
To the lordis of honour,
"Lordyngs, I wil ȝow telle,
For ȝoure love he schal dwelle
On lyve tyl to morwe day,
And by than as hit may."
Thay thank hit al the emperour,
That hadde don ham that honour,

That he grauntit ham that bone,
And that thay hadden hit so sone.
The emperour comandede anone,
Afftir the childe for to goon;
And thay brought hym into the halle,
Among the gret lordis all.
The emperour comanded anone
That he scholde to prison goon,
And in prison he lay ale nyght,
Til on the morwen the day lyȝt.
Now his the childe the prison brouȝt;
Mykile sorowe was in hys thout.
God that sytys in magesté,
Delyvere hym whan his wil bee!
The emperes was sory in thout,
That the childe agayn was brogt;
Scho morned and made mykil wo,
Til the day was a-go,
Than thay were in bed brought,
For to change hir lordis thouht,
When thay were in bede i-fere.
What scho sayed ȝe schulle here,
How ho brought hire lorde in wille,
Er hit was daye, the childe to spille.
Scho wippe and hir hondis wronge,
And afte syked sore amange.
The emperour laye and herde,
And asked hyre why ho so ferde,
And sayed, "Tel me anon
Why thow makyst al this mon."

" Sire," quod the lady tho,
" Hit his no wondir tho me be wo!
Thow were bettir to be dede,
Than wyrke eftyr sory rede.
Thou brewest thy self mykil bale,
To leve ilke mans tale:
Also mote bytide the
As dyde the fyne appul-tre,
For a branche that sprange biside
The grettir les alle hir pride."
" Certis, dame," quod [the] emperour,
"I woot thow lovyste my honour,
And thare-fore, dame, I the bydde,
Tel me how that bytydde,
And latte us studye thare-uppon
What his best for to doon."

FYRST TALLE.

Anon the lavedy hire tale bygan,
And sayd, " Sire, hit was a man,
As men sayen, hit was a kny3t,
And hadde a herber fayr dyght!
Now schaltou here how hit bytyde.
In the herber ryght amyde,
Oppon the appul-tre thare stoode,
A fayre tre and a goode;
Bothe harlyche and latte
The lorde was of tyme thare-atte,
And grette daynté he hadde
The tree see fayre spradde.
Withinne a wylle, hit is nou3t longe,

A branche out of the tre spronge,
And the knyght dayenteth hadde,
How hit wax and fayre spradde.
Oppon a day kam the knyght,
And sawe hym crokyn a lytil wyght;
A bou of the grette tre
Lettyde hym that he myȝt nout the.
Quod the lorde to his gardinere,
'Go feche an ax wil I ham here,
And hew a-down this mykyl bowe,
And latte the branche have rome y-now.'
The gardiner was sone went
To do the lordis commaundement.
Thus he lette norische the ȝong
That was out of the holde sprong,
And of hold he lete hewe
Many bowes and nowght fewe.
They lette the ȝonge branche sprede,
And the holde tre bygan to dede.
"The gardiner sawe alle the rote,
For sothe, sir, thare his no bote,
Al the vertu ther scholde bee,
Is lopon into the lytyl tre.
'*Par fay!*' quod the lorde tho,
Gardyner, when hit hys sooe,
Ther nyl bee non other botte,
Bot dyggyt up by the rote.
Thus was the tre bodun wronge,
For the braunche that of hym spronge.
Than the mykil tree wax al badde,

And the lytil the maystré he hadde.
Thus sal the branche that of the spronge
Fondon for to do the wronge,
And hewes thy bowys in ilke a syde,
That hys thy power that spredis so wide;
Thus when he bygynnys to bolde,
He wille brynge the a-down in olde."
Thus whas the wykkyd womman tale,
For to browe the childes bale.
"Dame," quod the emperour,
"By lorde saynt Savour,
For alle the men that beres brethe,
He sal to morwen thole dethe."
On the morwen, tho hit was day bryȝt,
The emperour clepid a knyght:
"To my pryson thou schalt goon,
And say my tormentours anoon,
Thay do my sone to tormentrie:
Certis, this day he schal dee."
The knyght was sory in hys thought,
Bote withsaye hym dorst he nought,
Bote bade the tormentours ilkon
Do the childe to dethe anoone.
Anoon the childe was lade to spyle,
To doo the emperours wille.
To-ward the deth as he was,
He mette with mayster Baucillas.
The childe was aferde to dee,
A kast on hym a ruful hye.
He rade forth and sayed nought;

He wyst wylle the childis thought.
For to save the childes honour,
He come wille sone to the emperour.
"Sire," quod maystir Baucillas,
"Certis, this his a wondir cas,
That thow art in wille pytte,
To sle thy sone withouten gylte."
Thanne sayed the emperour anoon,
"I have enchesone mo than oon.
ȝe sevene have haddyn in ȝoure powere
My sone al this seven ȝere,
To teche nortyre and wyt,
And ȝe have hys tonge cnyt.
Whan I prayd hym for charité,
He walde nought speke a worde with me.
And anothir cheson I have goode,
The fule thefe, the unky[n]de blode,
He was aboute my wyf to spyle,
For he no most nought have hys wille
To by hyr flesche lygge.
He schal dee syrtnlyche,
And ȝe also, by Good in hevene,
ȝe schal dee al sevene."
Than sayde Baucillas,
"A! sire emperour, alas!
That thow grevest the so sore,
Or thow haddyst queryd more.
Certys, I dare lygge my lyf,
Of that thow tellis of thy wyf,
The childe ne thought nought bot gode,

Wymman been of wundyr mode."
The [emperour] that wroth was,
Answerde Baucillas,
"Baucillas, lat be thy fare,
I see my wyfys hed bare,
And hir clothes al to-rent,
Afte the thef wold hir have schent."
Baucillas answerd tho,
For the childe hym wa[s] wo,
And sayed, "Sire, for thy lyf,
Bynym nought thy sonnys lyf;
And yf thow dost, so mot byfalle,
As fel the knyght in hys halle,
That byname hys growhund lyf,
That hadde savyd hys sonnys lyfe;
And for the dule he made ther-fore,
The knyght hym selven he was for-lore."
Quod [the] emperour than to Baucillas,
"Tel me how that tale was."
"Sire," quod Baucillas, "Wer-to?
Wat awantage were that to do?
Er the tale were tolde,
The childes blode wolde bee colde."
The emperour commande tho,
Afftir the childe for to goo.
The childe, that glad was of sokur,
Was brought byfore the emperour;
Thourow the emperour commandement,
Agayn to prison he was sende.
Anoon as the childe was agoon,
The mayster bygan hys tale anoon.

A TALE OF THE MAYSTER.

He sayed how ther was a knyght,
A ryche man of gret myghte,
And had a good womman to wyf,
And a womman of good lyf.
Bytwen thaym thare cam a ayer,
A good child and a fayre,
And 3onge hagge hit was,
A twelmowth holde it was.
Ther was no thing syrcurliche,
That the knyght lovyd so myche.
The knyght hadde another juel,
That he lovyd swyth wel,
A grewhond that was good and snel,
And the knyght lovyde hit wel,
And was swyth good of dede.
To alle bestis that he to 3ode;
And for his godnesse he was lore,
And the knyght was sory ther-fore.
[The] knyght ordaynde a day,
In a tyme, hit was in May,
Elcon with othir wolde play,
And fond to breke a schaft or twey.
The knyght of hit [herde] tell,
In his felde thay wolde dwelle,
Ryght a lytil fram his halle,
Ther thay were asembild alle;
Al that in the court was,
Wente to see the solas,
Save the childes norises two,

Thay ne durst nower ware goo.
Wen thay seen al ware goo,
And noman leved bot thay two,
And herdyn tronpe and taburne,
Thay forgate hare honoure;
Thay left the childe anon tho,
And dyde ham bothe forth goo,
In a toure thay clymbyd on hyghe
Pryvyliche tha[t] no man see;
Thare thay stode both stille,
And seen the gam al at wille.
In the court ther was wrowt
An olde toure that servyd of nou3t,
And in a crevas there was brede
A nedder, and hadde there-in a bedde.
Tho the nadder wok and herde
Al the pepyl how hit ferde,
Trumpe, tabur, and melodye,
And heraudis loude crye,
The nadder sowt way ower alle,
Til scho come out of the walle.
Out of the walle scho came,
Into the halle the way scho name,
And drow hym toward the credile ther-byne,
To sle the child that was ther-inne.
Toward the credyl as he suythe,
The good grew-hond lay and sy3e,
And was swyth wrothe withalle
That he cam into the alle.
The grewhond stood uppe anon,

And to the naddir he gan goon;
Ther thay faugthen togydir long,
And ayther wondid othyr strong.
As thay foghten, here ȝe moun,
The credyl went uppe-so-doun;
The credyl uppone the pomels stoode,
The child hadde nought bote goode;
Hyt no woke, no hyt no wyppe,
Bote alle stille and sleppe.
The grewhond ȝede the worme so nyghe,
That into the ȝerd the worme flyghe;
The grewhonde sewed hym so faste,
That he slew hym at the last.
Tho the naddir was falle,
The grewhonde layde hym in the halle,
Evelle wo[n]dyd over alle,
And for sothe he lay and ȝal.
When the justis were doon,
The norise hiede ham in ful sone,
Thay ne durst no langer dwelle,
Thay fande the grewhond lye and ȝelle,
And ferd as he were wodde,
And hys hed al by-bledde;
Thay two norise was were and seghe,
The credyl bothume turnyd on hyghe,
And sawe the grewhond al by-bled,
Thay war both sore a-drede.
"Felaw," scho sayed, "be my blode,
Thys grewhond his waxyn woode,
And hase eten the childe ther-fore:

Alas! that ever we were bore!"
The tother noris sayed i-wis,
"Certis, felaw, sothe hit his:
Alas! that stonde," sayde schoe,
"That we ȝeden justys to see!"
Thay were ful of sorow and wo,
And dyde thaym bothe for to goo.
As thay flowen toward the felde,
The lavydy lay and byhelde,
And hyre herte bygane to colde,
As womman herte sone wolde;
And wondird wat hit myght bee,
Tho he segh hir noris flee;
And clepid hir anoon a swayn,
And badde hym faste fete the noris agayne.
Byfore the lady thay were brought;
The lavydy was sory in hire thoght,
And askid ware the childe was.
And thay veppe and sayed, alas!
"Certis, dam," quod that oon,
"As wel mow we telle anoon:
My lordis grewhond his wexen wode,
And hase etten hym flesche and blode."
The lady swyth sory was,
And bygan to cry, alas.
The lord herde the lady crye,
And thydirward he gan hye,
And sayed, "Dam, wat is this fare?
Tel me anoon, nought no spare."
The lady, that was so woo,

Sayed to hyre lorde tho,
"Sire," ho sayed, "sycurlyche,
The childe that thou lovedest so myche,
Thy grewhond has waxen woode,
And hase eten hym flesche and blood."
Than was the lorde sory i-nowe;
In towarde the halle he hym drowe,
And the lady with hym nam.
Into the halle sone he kam:
The grewhond hys lorde syghe,
And sete bothe hys fete on hyghe
Oppon hys brest to make solas;
And the more harme was.
The knyght drow out hys swerd anoon,
And smot out the rygge boon.
The knyght comanded anoon ryght,
Bere the cradyl out of hys syght.
Ther stood a man that was glad
To do that the knyght bade,
And bare the credyl out in hys arme,
And sawe the childe hadde no harme.
In hys arme the childe he hent,
And into the halle he went,
And sayed, "Alas, thy good grewhond!
Hire isti sone hole and sounde."
Tho that weren in the halle
Hadden grette wondyr alle,
That the chylde on lyve was,
And sayden hit was a wondir cas.
At the last thay fanden alle,

How the cas was byfalle,
How the naddir was y-slawe,
That the grewhond hadde to-drawe.
" Alas!" quod the knyght tho,
" My good grewhond hys a-goo."
The knyght was sory ther-fore,
That hys grewhond was for-lore;
Into hys horchard thay way he nome,
And to a fische-pole he come,
And for dule of hys hounde
He lepe in and sanke to gronde.
" Sire," quod maystir Baucillas,
" Now thow havest herde this cas,
Yf thow wolt thy sone spille,
For to suffyre thy wyves wylle,
Also mote the byfalle
As dyde the knyght in hys halle,
That slew hys hounde and lyse hys lyfe,
For a worde of hyse wyfe."
Tho the emperour herde
Of that tale, how hit ferde,
He sayed, " Maystir Baucillas,
Me ne schal nouȝt bytyde that cas
For no word of my wyf,
To day ne schal he lyse hys lyfe;
No nouȝt he ne schal by boundon so sore,
Arre I have inqueryd more."
Thus thorow the maystir Baucillas,
That day the childe savyd was.
Myghte no man the lady glade,

Scho syghyd and sory semlant made,
And was sory in hyre thought
That the childe agayne was brought,
And bythought hire agayens nyght,
And dyd thare-to alle hyre myghte,
To brynge the emperour in wille
Uppon morwen the childe to spylle.
In bede than thay were brought,
" Sire," scho sayed, " What have ȝe thoght?
Ne see thou nouȝt with thyn eyen
Were I was in poynt to deyen,
As thy sone me wolde a schent,
That hys agayn to prison sente.
Also mote bytyde the,
As dyde the bore undyr the tre,
That was clavyd, and thought hit gode,
And lese ther-fore hys hert blode."
Quod the emperour to hys wyfe,
" Dame, lete be thy stryf,
And tel me nowe, I the byde,
Of the bore how hit bytydde.
And
Anoon hire tale by-gane.

A TALE.

And sayed, " Syre, hit was a bore,
And woned in a holde hor;
Ther was a tre in the forest
That the bore loved best,
To ete the fruyte that thare was oon.

Every day that cam to maane
He come thydyr aboute undiren,
To ete the fruyte that laye ther-under.
A h[e]rde man hadde a best lore,
And mykyl dule made ther-fore;
Longe nolde he nought abyde,
He soughte hys best in hilk a syde.
Into the forest the way he nam,
And byfore the tre he cam,
There the bore was wont by fede,
And her he ȝede he was a-drede.
Hym thought that the fruyt was goode,
And gadderd bret ful hys hoode.
The bore come rennyng towarde the tree
There hys mete was wounte to bee;
Tho the knave hadde a fryȝt,
Of the bore he hadde a syȝt,
And the bore neghyd nee;
He clam uppon the tree on hyghe.
The bore byhyde hym thydyr faste,
And uvele spede at the laste.
And has he come, ful wyle he syghe
How the knave clam on hyghe,
And bygan tothes to wette,
And to the tre byre he fette,
And layden as he were wode,
Til hys mouthe famed of blode.
And thau the tree were rote faste,
ȝyt was the knave agaste;
Of the fruyt that was browne

The knave kast the bore a-doune,
And he was for-ungrid sore,
And ete, and nolde hew no more.
Undir the tre he stode ful stille,
And of the fruyt ete hys fylle.
The knave stode uppon a bowghe,
And kest a-downe fruyt i-noughe,
When the bore hase eten hys fylle,
Undir the tree he stode ful stille.
That knave kest hym fruyt y-nowe,
And clam a-doune fra bough to boghe,
And with hys on hond at the laste
And with hys legges held hym fast;
The tohir honde he lete doun glidde,
And clavde the bore undir the syde.
The bore lykyde the clavyng wele,
And anoon to grounde felle,
And lay slepyng stille as stoon.
The knave drowe out a knyf anoon,
And rent hys wombe with the knyf,
And bynam the bore hys lyf.
Thus schaltou be clovyd alse
With fykyl wordis and with false,
An[d] thy sone the traytur
Schal be madde a emperour:
Thorugh thy false clerkis sevene
Thow wylt by gylled, by Good in heven!"
Quod the emperour, "By saynt Brydde,
That no sal me nou3t bytydde;
He ne sal do no more sorowe,

Certis, he sal dee to-morne."
Oppon the morwen, wen hit was day,
The eemperour made grete ray,
And commaunde hys men anoon
To slee the childe thay schuld gone.
Thay took the childe out of prison,
And ladde hym withouten toun:
As thay ladde hym by the strete,
On of hys maystirs he gan mete,
Toward the emperour he rode,
And welne al to longe he bode.
When he hadde the child mette,
The maystir made hys hor go bete,
For to save the childe fram schame.
Ancillas was hys name.
Ful hastylich the way he nam,
Byfore the emperour he cam,
A clerk he was of grete honour,
And gret anoon the emperour.
The emperour answerde with ire,
"Maugré have thow, bone sire,
I ȝow took my sone to teche,
And ȝe have raft hym hys speche:
By Jhesu Crist, that hys in hevene,
ȝe sal to prison al sevene."
"A! sire," quod mayster Ancilles,
"God almighty send us pees!
Sire, ne make ȝow nouȝt so wroth,
Thow wost nowght alle how hit goth;
And yf thy sone lyse hys lyfe,

For the talys of thy wyfe,
I bysyke God in hevene,
For hys dyrworth mannys sevene,
That ȝe bytyde swilk a cas
As bytyde Ypocras,
That slow hys cosyn withouten gylt,
And hym selven ther-fore was spylt."
Quod the emperour to Ancilles,
"Certis, thou schalt never have pees,
Er I wyt of that cas,
That bytyde Ypocras."
Quod Ancillas, "Sire, were-to?
Wat avantage were that y-do?
Er my tale wer tolde,
The childys blode wolde be colde;
Bote yf I mote hys lyf borowe
Al thys nyght tyl to-morwen,
Gyf he myght on lyf dwelle,
Of Ypocras I wylle telle."
Anon the childe was aftir sent,
Thorow the emperoures commandement.
Than was the mayster a glad man,
And anon hys tale bygane.

A TALLE.

"A nobile fysysian thar was,
And was callid Ypocras;
He hadde a cosyn of hys blode
That longe walde leren no goode,
Of the world lytyl he thought,

Bote at the laste he hym bythought,
How and in what manere
He myghte any goodys lere.
Hys emys bokis he unselde,
And ilk a day on thaym byhelde,
And bycam a fysysian,
Also good as anny mane.
The kynge sone of Hungrye
Hadde a woundir maladye:
The kynge sent aftir Ypocras,
For to wyten wat hym was.
Ypocras was ale olde,
And hys blode wax ale colde,
He let atyre wile a[nd] fyne,
And sent thydyre hys cosyne.
Anon as he was comen,
By the hande he was nome,
And he was ladde anoon,
Also stille as a ston,
Ther the kynge sone laye,
That hadde by syke many day.
The childe couthe of fysenamye,
That he saw wyl with hys eye,
When he hade a wyle syttyne,
That the childe was mys-gettyne.
Syche wyse clerkys were goo;
Now no bythor non of tho:
Thay late be al the clergye,
And tornys to pryde and lycherie.
Thanne the childe were gode of lore,

ȝyt he wolde aqwere more;
Fram hyre maydens ten or twelve,
He took the quene by hyre selvene,
And sayde, 'Madame, be nought wroth,
To telle ȝe me thynke nowt lothe,
Yf thou wilt have thy sone on lyve,
For sothe, dame, thou most the schryve:
Tel me how thow havest wroght,
For sothe the kynge ne gat hym nouȝt,
And bot thow telle how hit hys,
I may nought hel thy sone i-wys.
Of hys hele he ase ne swat,
Bot thow telle wo hym bygate.'
The quen that was the kyngys wyf,
Was lothe to lesyn hyre sone lyfe,
And sayd to hym privyliche,
Bytwen thaym two specialiche,
'Thare was a prince hire bysyde,
And oft sythes he wolde ryde
With my lorde for to play,
And love wax bytwen us twey,
And so [was] he getyn i-wys:
Now thow wost how hit hys.'
When he wyst al the cas,
He tornyd hit al [to] solas,
And the childe undirtoke,
As taught hym Ypocras booke;
And he helyd the childe ol and sound,
And hadde ther-fore many a pound,
And of the quene many gyftis fele,

For he schulde hire counsel hele;
And went hom to Ypocras,
And told hym al how hit was.
Ypocras was welny wode,
That hys cosin couthe so mykyl good,
And thout anoon a wylkyd thout,
For to bryng hys cosyn to nowt.
Oppon a day thay went to pleye,
He and hys cosyn thay twey,
Into a swyth fayre mede,
There fayre floure gan sprede.
Ipocras stille stood,
And saw a gras that was god:
'Bon cosyn,' quod Ypocras,
'I se a gras of grete solas,
Were hyt dyggyd uppe by the rote,
Of many thyngs hit myght be bote.'
Than sayd the childe to Ypocras,
'Leve syre, were hys that gras?'
Quod Ypocras, ever vorthym wo,
'Loe, were hyt stondis at my too.
Knele a-doun oppon thy knee,
And dyggyd uppe and bryng hit me,
And I wyl the telle, i-wys,
What vertu ther-inne hys.'
The childe knelid anoon a-doun:
Ypocras drow anoon fauchon,
And slow hys cosyn, the more arme was,
Wyle he dyggyd aftyr the gras.
Tho went he hom anoon,

And bernyd hys bokys ilkon,
In wrat, as a man that were wode,
For noman schuld lerne of ham good.
When he hadde hys bokys brent,
And hys cosyn was schent,
He fel in a maladye,
That he was in poynt to dye.
Than was ale hys bokys lore,
And he ne couthe medycyne ther-fore:
Tho hadde he slane hys cosyne,
That couthe wel of medycyne;
For faut of helpe he ferde amys,
And at the laste he deyde, i-wys.
"Thus was Ypocras dede,
And, sire, ther-fore take thy rede.
Thow no havest no sone bote oon;
Yf thow lattis hym to deth gon,
Whan helde byndys thy bones stoute,
Thare hys bote fewe that wyle the doute.
And yf thou havest thy sone bolde,
For soth, were thow never so holde,
For thy sone men wyle the drede,
Let hym lyve, I wylle the rede."
Quod the emperour, "By myn hede,
To nyght no schal he nought be dede,
Bytwene thys and to morwen day,
Be thanne as hit be may."
Al that in the palas was
Maden myrth and solas,
Bothe more and the lesse;

Save the wykkyd emperesse,
Scho syghed and swore amonge,
Ala! alas! was hyre songge.
  The emperour herd hyre say, alas!
And askyd hyre what hyre was.
"Sire," scho sayed, "Wo hys me!
And al togydyr hit hys for the;
Thare thow art both lorde and sire,
And maystir over al the emperire,
Thow arte abowte thy selven to spylle;
Yf thy clerkys have thare wylle,
Thay wille make hym emperour,
That thyf that lyes in the tour.
And yf thou lovest hym more thane me,
Also mote bytyde the,
As hym that in the lym was dede,
That made hys sone smyt of hys hede."
  Quod the emperour, "I the byde,
Telle me how that bytydde."

A TALE.

  The emperesse hire tale bygane,
And sayd, "Sire, hit was a mane,
Emperour of Rome he was,
And nowt lovyd no solas,
Bot was about to fylle a toure
Ful of golde and ryche tresour.
Swylke seven clerkys hadde hee
Undir hym as have ȝe.
The seven clerkis that with hym were,

Alle at hom nouȝt thay were;
Thorow the emperour comandement,
The fyve were out wente,
And the twa at home thay byeth,
For to do that he thaym bydeth.
That othir ladde myry lyf,
And haddyn both childryn a[nd] wyf;
Hit was a man withouten kare,
And ryclych he wolde fare,
What he spendid he nouȝt rought,
And that hys nek sore abought.
When hys catel bygan to slake,
And he ne myght no fest make,
There felle a wyel in hys thoute,
And ther-thourow he wente to nowt,
And bitidde a wondir kas,
And ȝe schal here how hit was.
He adde a sone that was heyre,
A good childe and a fayre;
Thay wente and breken that tour,
And bare away mykyl tresoure,
And mad hym myry, and spendid faste,
Al the wylle that hit wolde laste.
He that lokyd the tresour,
Come a day into the tour,
And over-al he keste hys syght,
To loke whehir hit ferde ryght.
He was freche, he was nought dronke,
He saw the tresour was sonke;
He lette remue the tresour anone,

And fand ware the thyf was goon.
Byfore thare the hole was,
He sette a deppe caudron of bras,
A manere of glowe he dyde thare-inne,
To halden all that com thare inne,
And helyd thare the cawdron stode,
As thare were nought bot gode.
He that the tresour stale,
Hadde spendid hit and wastyd alle:
He sayes, 'Sone, by Goddys sore,
Of the tresour we wylle have more.'
He and hys sone were at on,
And thydyr-ward thay gan goon,
In the wanyng of the mone;
The fadir was desavyde sone.
In at the hole the fadir crepe,
And in the caudron sone he lepe,
And anoon he styked faste.
Than was hys sone sore agaste.
'Sone,' he sayed, 'I ham hent;
Fle anoon ar thow art schent.'
'A! fadir,' he sayed, 'alas!
Certys thys hys a wondyr kas.
For soth I can no rede nowe:
Leve fadir, how reddyst thow?'
'Certis,' he sayd, 'hit his no rede,
Bot hastilich smyt of my hede,
And god laysyr when thou myght have,
Byrye hit in cristyne grave.'
The childe was in grete thought,

To helpe his fadir he myght nouȝt,
And saw thare was non othir rede,
Bote smote of his fadir hede,
And knyt hit in hys lappe onoon,
And dyde hym hastilyche to goon;
And anoon has he ham came,
Out of hys lape the hede he name,
And in a forme he let hit fale,
And dyde a wykkyd torne withalle.
Thane he hadde hys fadir gode,
Thane wax he hote of blode;
No sorow in hert he ne hadde,
How foul deth hys fadyr hadde.
Than he had that hys fadir gate,
Hys fadir deth he al for-gat.
Certis, sire, thus woltu fare:
Ther-fore hys al my kare.
Thou schalt lese thyn honour,
And thy sone be emperour,
As othir have doon thou schalt als,
Thorow talys of thy clerkys fals."
Quod the emperour to the emperesse,
" So I ever here mas,
My sone ne schale never do me that sorowe,
Certys he schal dee to-morwen."
Thus hys wyf, that cursyd lyfte,
Brewed the childys deth that nyght.
Uppe of the morwen lange are prime,
The emperour ros by tyme,
And thys was hys commandement,

That the childe anoon where schent.
The tormentours wer ful rade
To do tha[t] the emperour bade;
Thay ne made noon delay,
Bot took the child, and went hare way,
And toward the studye thay hym lede
There men schulde the chylde byhede.
Ryght as thay come atte the ȝate,
Hys o maystir hym mette thare-atte,
In hys hert was no game,
Lentulus was hys name.
Oppon the childe he cast hys eie,
Hym thought for sorow he myght dee:
Anoon the way he nam,
And byfore the emperour cam,
And sayed, "My lord, syr emperour,
God the save and thyn honour!"
The emperour answerde anoon,
"A! tratour, thow art that oon
That I bytook my sone teche,
And he hase loste hys speche,
And wolde have lyne by my wyf:
He schal dee, by my lyf!"
"Syre," quod maystir Lentulus,
"I ne leve hit nouȝt, by my lyf,
To do vylany by thy wyf;
Bot yf thou brewyst thy childis bale,
For hys stepmodir tale,
So mote the bytyde in thy lyfe,
As dyd the olde man in hys lyf."

Quod the emperour, "I the byde,
Tel me how that cas bytyde."
"Sire," quod maystir Lentulus,
"I nylle, by swet Jhesus,
Bot thy chylde deth by let,
That he ben agayen fet,
And mot lyve al this nyght
Til to-morwen til day be bryght."
The emperour comaunde anoon
Aftyr the childe for to goon:
Thorow commaundement of the emperour
The childe was ladde into the tour.
Lentulus was a glad man,
And anoon hys tale bygane.

A TALE.

"Hyt was a man and hadde a wyfe,
And loved hyre as hire owen lyf;
Scho was both ȝong and bolde,
And the housband whas holde,
Hys myrth in bede bygan to slake,
And scho tooke another make.
In bed as thay lay in fere,
The wyf aros, as ȝe moun here,
Fram hire hosbonde thare he lay,
A lytyl wyl byfore daye,
Witouten dore at the ȝate
Scho mete hyre lemman thare-atte.
The godman withinne a while
Myssyd hys wyf, and thout gyle.

He ros uppe as stille as a stone,
And to the dore he gane goone,
And bygan ful stille to spye,
And herde of hyre putrye,
And went hym stille as stoone,
And steke to the dore anoone.
When thay hadde done thayre wyle,
And spoken togydir or fylle,
The wyf fonde the dore faste;
Than whas scho sore agaste.
Scho pute at the dore in hye,
And bygan loud to crye,
And badde the delve hys neke to breke
That the dore hadde steke.
The sylyman lay and herde,
And hys wyf answerd,
'Dame,' he sayed, 'go thy way,
Thow havest bygonne a sory play;
To morwen sal oppon the gonne
As many men as been in toune.'
Walaway scho gan to synge,
And hyr hondis for to wryng:
'Mercy, sire, I am thy spouse,
For Goddys love lat me to house!'
Quod the godman anoon,
'Goo thare thow hast to goon:
So God almyghty gyf me wyne,
Thou ne schalt to come hyre-ine,
Ar alle our frendys ilkon
Have gounde oppon thy body alon.'

Quod the wyf, 'So moti i-thryve,
I wylle nought so lange be alyve.'
Hastilich within a wylle,
Scho was bythought oppon a gylle;
Byfore the dore, as I 3ow telle,
Thare was a mykyl deppe welle,
And a stoon lay thare-by
As mykil as a manys the,
As hit tellys in the booke,
In hyr armes scho hit tooke,
In the wel ho lette hit falle.
The godman herdit into the halle,
And hadde reuthe of hys wenche,
And wende ho wold hyre self adrynge,
And ros uppe in hys serke anoon,
And to the wel he gan goon,
As man that was in good lyf,
And thout for to save hys wyf.
The wyf was ful wyly,
And stod the dore swyth nee,
Into the halle scho gan goon,
And stek to the dore anoon.
The godman was ful uvele myght,
He sowt hys wyf in the pytte,
And hurt hym, and hent harme,
And scho lay in hyr bede warme.
On evyl deth mote scho dee!
So bleryd the sely manys ee,
And love hir so myche,
Ful falle alle syche.

When he fandir nouȝt in the welle,
He walde ther no langer dwelle,
At hys dore he wolde inne,
And hit was stoken with a pyne.
He schof ther-onne, and bade undo:
Scho lay stille and let hym doo.
The lawe was than so harde bounden,
Yf a housbond were in hurdom founden,
He schuld have a juggement,
Were-thorow he schuld be schent;
And armyd men by nyght thare ȝede.
The godman was ful sore agaste,
That he fande the dore faste;
He knokede, and was in mykyl kare.
The wyf askyd wo was there,
The goodman was ful sore adrade,
That herd hys wyf in hys bede,
And sayed, 'Dame, I ham here,
Thy spouse and thy trewe fere:
Arys uppe, and draw oute the pyne,
Goode lef, and let me inne.'
'A! traytour!' quod scho tho,
'Ga bylyve were thou havest to go,
To thyn hore there tho[u] were,
Go agayn and herborowe thare.'
To speke fayre he to hede,
For he saw hit was ned:
'Dame, lete me in to my bede,
And now be thow nought adrede;
For by the lorde saynt Nycolas,

I wyl forgyve the thy trespas.'
'Nay, traytour,' quod scho tho,
'Certis also wel thow myght goo;
By Good that hys ful of myght,
Thow schal nowt come here-in to nyght.'
As thay spoken lowde togyder,
The wakmen herde and come thydyr;
The toon sayed, 'Wat art thow,
That standys here thys tyme nowe?'
'A! sire,' he sayed, 'mercy!
And I wille ȝow telle resoune why:
I hadde a spangel good of plyght,
I have hit mysde al thys seven-nyght,
And I not how hit ferde,
Me thought here-out I hym herde,
And cam out to clepyn hym inne,
And my wyf hase put in the pyne
In the dore oppon hyre game:
Go forth, a Godys name!"
'Certis he lyes,' quod hys wyf,
'Hyt hys a man of wykkyd lyfe.
I have helyd, for I wende
That he wolde somtyme amende;
Ther-fore now ȝe have hym hent,
Lat hym passe by juggement.'
The wakmen nolde no langer abyde,
They token hym in ilke a syde,
And lad hym into the toune,
And put hym in prisone,
And lay alle nyght in mykyl sorowe,

And hadde hys juggement a-morwen.
Thus he hadde hys juggement,
And thorow hys wyf he was schent.
So wyltou, sire emperour,
Certis lese thyn honour,
To bynym thy sonys lyf
For a tale of thy wyffe."
Quod the emperour, "By swet Jhesus,
For thy tale, sire Lentulus,
To day ne schal he lese the lyffe
For no tale of my wyf."
Than commande the emperour
Do hys sone into the tour.
Thay dyden anoon as he bade:
Tho was Lentulus glad.
When the emperes that undirstode,
For wrat scho was welne wode,
That the emperours thout was went,
And the childe to prison sent.
Al that day scho fonded hyre flygt,
How scho myght agayens nyght
Fonden a tale al newe,
The childe deth for to brewe.
Scho was al redy bythout,
Wen scho was to bede brogt;
Of[t] sythes scho sygkyd sore,
And stilly scho sayed, "Lord, thy ȝore!"
The emperour lay and herde,
And acsyd hyre why scho so ferde.
"Sire," quod [the] emperesse tho,

"It his no wondir tho me be wo:
Now hys my wo to bygyne,
Now we sal parten in twynne.
I nylle no langer hyre abyde,
To se the wo that ȝe sal bytyde.
By God Almyghty that hys in hevene,
Thy sonne and thy clerkys sevene
Thay ben alle at on asent;
Certys, syre, thow worst schent.
And, syre, bot thow leve me,
Also mote bytyde the
As dyde the styward of hy[s] lyf,
That gret gyng hys wyf."
"Dame," quod the emperour,
"I bysyke the *par amour*,
Tel me now of that kas,
Whilk maner and how hyt was."

A TALLE.

"Certis," quod the emperes,
"Thow schalt here of wykkydnesse.
In Pule was som tyme a kynge
That hatyd wymmen of alle thyng;
Never ȝyt in alle hys lyf
He nolde never have no wyf.
In Romauns hyt tellys in a booke,
That a grete ivel hym tooke;
The ivel passyd over alle,
That hys body al to-swal,
That hys body was al to-blaw
No man myght hys membris know.
Into Salner he sent a man

Aftyr a nobile fesisian ;
Anoon has he was come,
By the honde he was nome,
Into the chambyr he was lade
For to make the kynge glade.
When he saw the kyng pyne,
He askyd anoon hys uryne;
Anoon as he the uryne sawe,
He wyst were hys ivel lay,
And sayed, 'Sire, ne amay the nouȝt,
For soth thy bote hys broght.'
When [he] herde thys thythyng,
Thane comfordede the kyng.
The mayster was wys and snel,
And made hys medicyne wille,
And anoon gaf he hit the kynge,
And abatyd the swellyng.
'Syre,' quod the fysisian,
'The behoves have a womman
To do thy wyl by a-nyght,
Yf I schal helle the arygh t.'
Quod the kyng, 'So mot I the,
Astow wylt hyt schal bee.'
The kyng callyd hys senescal,
That hadde hys hows to kepe alle,
And sayed to hym, 'Thow moste aspye,
And hastylich thou most hye,
A fayr lady of colour brygh t
For to lygge by me a-nygh t,
And at scho be of he lynage,

And a lady of ȝong age.'
'Sire,' quod the stiwarde anoon,
'Al byssi schal I fynde oon:
For los of thy malydye
Thay wille be aferd to dye.'
Quod the kynge, 'Thow sayest thi wille,
With gold and silver thow schal thaym tylle;
Gyf thaym golde and silvyr i-nowe:
I am ryche man i-nowhe?'
Than the styward undirstood
The kyng wald gyve so mykyl good,
He took hys lyve and hom he cam,
And by the hond hys wyf name,
And sayed, "By sayent Benedyght,
Tho[u] schalt ly by the kyng to nyght,
Golde and sylver thow schalt wynne,
And ben asolyd of thy synne.'
'Certis, syre,' quod hys wyfe,
'Now thow lovest lytil my lyf.'
For covetyse that he hadde,
To the kynge hys wyf he ladde.
He went unto the kynges bedde,
And sayed, 'Syre, I have spede,
I have a lady of hegh bloode,
Bot scho wyl have mykyl good,
And dyrke scho wolde that hit bee,
Scho nylle that no man hyre see.'
'Parfay!' quod the kyng anoon,
'Lette quenche the torches ilkon.'
Ho lette quenche the torche ilkone,

And took hys wyf by honde anoon,
And dyde hyre to bed with [the] kynge,
That covetous gadlyng.
Al the nyght thare scho lay,
Til a myl byfor the day:
Al nyght scho sykkyd and sorow made;
The kyng no myghte hyre nothyng glade.
The styward was of day adrede,
And kam to the kynges bede,
And sayed, 'Syre, on al wys,
Thow most that lady ryse.'
Quod the kyng, 'By saynt Jon,
ȝyt no schal scho nouȝt gon.'
He heldyr thare tyl hit was day;
And anoon as he saye
Hyt was the stiward wyf,
There bygan to ryse stryfe.
Than sayed the kynge,
That was wrothe som thyng,
'Styward, so God the rede,
Who made the do thys dyde?
Be thow in my court founde
Whanne the sonne gos to grounde,
Withouten ony othyr lawe
Thow schalt be angyd and to̤-drawe;
Loke withouten ony delay
That I see the never aftyr thys day.'
The senescal drade thys wordys sore,
He ne durst dwel ther no more;
Out of the court the way he name,

Wyste thay never were he bycam.
Lo, my lord syre emperour,
How he lese hys honour!
The styward for hys covetyse,
Hys wyf he lost and hys servys.
Certis, sire, so saltow alse,
For covetyse of thy tales false
That thyn fals clerkys tellen;
For soth y nylle nouȝt longe dwellen,
That thou nult lese thyn honour,
And thyn sone ben emperour.
I the telle as hit his,
Do now what thy wille hys."
Quod the emperour to the emperesse,
"By hym that made matyns and messe,
I nyll to morwen ete no brede
Er the thef traytour be ded."
O-morwen commande the emperour
Tak hys sone out of the tour,
And leden hym to hys juggement,
Anon that he were schent.
Withoutyn ony more chest
Thay dyden the emperour hest.
Without the palas tho he was,
He mete with hys maystyr Maladas.
Into the halle the way he nam,
Byfore the emperour he cam,
And sayd, "Alas! sir emperour,
Thou dost thy self lytyl honour,
That thy sone schal be slawe,

Withouten proses of lawe."
"Certys," quod the emperour,
"Bade men sle the wykkyd tratour,
And thow thy felaws ȝe ben fals,
Thay schal ben hangede and thow alse."
"Certys, syre," quod Maladas,
"Thys hys a wondyr cas,
To bynym thy sones lyf,
For a tale of thy wyf;
And yf thou dost, syre emperour,
God leve the falle swilk honour
As the olde man hadde welne hent,
Ne hadde hys wyf have had chastement,
That hadde mynt, without respyte,
Have doon hire a ful despyte."
Quod the emperour to Maladas,
"Thow sal tel me of that cas,
For I ne herde never in my lyve
Old man chasty ȝong wyf."
"Sire," quod mayster Maladas,
"Yf thow wylt here of that cas,
By Jhesu Cryst omnypotent,
The chylde schal ben aftyr sent."
Thorow commandement of the emperour,
The childe was lade into the toure;
Ther-fore gladdyd many a man,
And Maladas hy's tale bygane.

A TALE.

"Sire," quod maystir Maladas,
"Herkyn how fel that cas.

Hyt was a man of olde lyfe,
And hadde a ȝong womman to wyfe,
And hys blode bygan to colde,
And the wenche bygane to bolde.
Than he slakyd of hys werke,
Scho bygan to love a clerke.
O day to the kyrke scho came,
And hyr modyr in councel nam,
And sayed to hyr modyr anoon,
'My lordys merryghe hys welne gone,
Now he slakys to lygge above;
I wyl have another love.'
'Dougter,' quod the moder tho,
'I ne rede nouȝt thow do soe:
Thow an old man holde hym stille,
Dougter, thou wost nought al hys wille.
Ar thou do swylk a dede,
Prove hym first, I wyle the rede.'
The douter took hire leve anoon,
And dyde hyre hastylych to gon,
And thout hyr lorde for to prove.
The lorde hadde an hympe gode,
Tha[t] in a fayr herber stood,
And the lorde loved hit myche;
For in his orcher nere non syche,
So nobil pers as hyt bare.
Thare-of the wyf [was] ware,
On of hyr men with hyr he nam,
And to the hymp sone he cam,
And dyde anoon as a schrewe,

On the tre gobettys lette hewe,
And in the halle let hit lygge,
To loke what he wolde sygge.
" When the lord in cam,
Of the tre hed he nam;
'Dame,' he sayd, 'were grew this tre,
That lyes thus hewen in trhe?'
'Sire,' scho sayed, 'in thyn erber,
Hyt grewe nowthir fer no ner.'
'Depardus! dame,' quod he tho,
'Now hit hewen hys, let hit go.'
In hys hert he was wroth,
Bote to contak he was loth;
He ne sayed nouȝt al that he thout.
The dougter anoon the way nam,
And to the modir sone he cam,
And sayed, 'Modir, so mot I the,
I have doon as thow bade me;
Hys fayre hympe that thow see,
That sprade so brood and so heye,
I lete hewyt by the more,
And ȝyt was he nowt wroth ther-fore.'
"'Dogter,' quod the moder tho,
'I walde red the, as I mot go,
Prove hym ȝyt anothir stound,
Are love thow have to ard bound.
Thow he were stille and spake nouȝt,
Thou wost never what hys thout.'
ȝyt [scho] sewyd hyr modyr wylle,
And went hom al ston stille,

And bythout hire al by the way
Oppon a schrewydschyp or tway,
And anoon in the stude
A gret schrewnes he dude.
The lord a lytyl kenet hadde,
He loved hit wel, the hit were bad.
Hyt byfelle that ilke day
The kenet on hir lappe lay;
God gyfe hyre ivel happe!
Scho slowe the kenet oppon hire lappe.
'Dame,' quod he, 'why dustou soo?
That was nouȝt wyl doo.'
'Sire,' scho sayed, 'be nouȝt wroth,
Lo he hase byfoulyd my clothes.'
'Dame,' he sayed, 'by saynt Rycher,
Thou myghtyst drawe thy clothes nere,
And late my hondis on lyf go:
I pray the, dame, sle no mo,
Thow thay lyge oppon thy clothe;
Yf thou dost, I wylle be wrothe.'
Scho thout tho, 'Thay that wil spare
To have a lemman for hys fare.'
That ilke day scho the way nam,
And to hir modir sone he cam.
'Dam,' scho sayed, 'So God my rede,
I have donn asstow me bede:
Mi lorde hade a kenet fel,
That he loved swyth wel;
So God gyf me good happe,
I hym slow on my lappe,

And made hym lese hys hert blode,
And he sayed nouȝt bot good.
I nylle wounde nowt i-wys,
To love were my wille hys;
For sothe, dame, I may wel,
I have spyde he hys nouȝt fel.'
'Dougter,' quod the modir tho,
'I reed that thow do nouȝt soo:
Old men wille thole mykil wronge,
Bot for soth hys wreche hys stronge;
Ther-for my rede hys thys,
Prove thrys ar thou doo amys.'
'Dame,' quod the dogter tho,
'Gladlych, so mot I goo;
Bot thau he wrothe hym never so sore,
For sothe I nylle prove hym no more.'
And at hir moder leve he nam;
Toward hyr oune house ho cam,
And by the way as scho ȝode,
Scho thout oppon a schreud dede.
"Sone aftyr hit bytydde,
That the godman lete byde
A swythe fayre companye,
And made a fayre maungerye.
As thay sytten and mad ham glade,
The goodman fayre semlant made;
The wyf fast hyre keyes wrothe,
In the ende of the borde clothe,
Scho roos uppe and dyde hyre to gone,
And drow doun coppys and dyschys ilkone,

And schent robys of riche grene,
And broght al the gestis in tene.
The goodman was ful wroth,
And let castyn anothir cloth,
And made hare clothes be wypit and dyȝt,
And solace thaym as wel as he myght.
When alle hys gestys were a-goo,
Than bygan to wakken wo;
Bytwen the goodman and hys wyf,
Than bygan to ryse a stryfe.
'Dame,' he sayed, 'so mot I the,
Thou havest don me despites thre;
So God mak me good man,
Thou schalt be chasted, yf I cane.
Dame, thow havest ben thryes wode,
For soth thow shalt be latyn blode.'
He ladde hyr into a chambyr,
He and hys brothyr,
And late the on arm blood ther,
And after the thothyr;
He leved no blode in hys wyf,
Bot a lytil to holde hyre lyf.
When sche hadde so blede,
He layed hyre in a fayre bede.
When scho wok out of a swoune,
He gaf hyre met and drynk anoone,
And, 'Dame,' sayed, 'ly al stylle,
Thou schalt have met and drynke at wile,
And ever when thou waxist wode
Thou schalt be latyn blood.'

'Sire,' scho sayed, 'mercy, I aske ȝore,
And I wylle wrathe the no more.'
'Par fay, dame,' quod he tho,
'For-why that thou doo no moo
Swilke trespas, while I leve,
This thre schal be forgyven.'
Than walde sche no more
Leven of the clerkis lore,
For fere to be lat bloode;
Bot heldir algat trew and good.
"Sir," quod maystir Maladas,
"Lo swilke a woundir kas
Hadde welne bytyde the olde wise;
Ne hadde he lerned to chatyse
Hys wyf at hys comaundement,
How evilliche he hadde ben schent.
Sertis, sire emperour,
Thus schaltou lese thyn honour,
And thow suffry thy wywys wille,
That thow wilt thy sone spille.
Aftir that mysdyde scho wile do mo,
And bryng the into more wo."
Quod the emperour, "By saynt Martyn,
That schal scho nowt, wyf hys scho myn:
So I evere broke myn hede,
To day ne schal my sone be dede."
Than the emperes herde this,
Scho was swith sori i-wys,
Scho syghyd, and sory chere made,
Myght hyr that day no man glade.
When scho was to bede broght,

Scho syghyd sore and sayed noght.
The emperour, that lay fol softe,
Herde hys wyf syghen ofte,
And sayed, "Dame, saye me thy wylle,
Why mornes thou and syghys so stille?"
Quod the emperes to the emperour,
"Certys, sire, for thyn honour:
Thow art smytyn in covatyse,
Whare-of thy sorowe wylle aryse.
Thou covetes in alle manere
Thyn seven clerkis for to here.
Thou schalt lese thyn honour,
As dyde Crassus the emperour,
That for covetyse was slawe
Withouten any proses of lawe."
Quod the emperour, "By saynt Jon,
Thou schalt telle me anon
How Crassus lese thourow covetyse
Is lyf, and on wilk wyse."

A TALLE.

The emperes hire tale bygane,
And sayde, "Sire, hit was a mane,
Merlyn he hatte, and was a clerke,
And bygan a wondir werke;
He made in Rome thourow clergyse
A piler that stode fol heyghe,
Heyer wel than ony tour,
And ther-oppon a myrrour,
That schon over al the toun by nyght

As hyt were day lyght,
That the wayetys myght see;
Yf any man come to cité
Any harme for to doon,
The cité was warnyd soone.
Thare was contek ofte and lome
Bytwen Pule and the cité of Rome.
The kynge of Pule hadde no myght
To stele oppon the town by nyght,
For the myrrour was so clere,
That kest lyght fer and nere.
Twa clerkys was in hys londe,
Twa brythers, that token on honde
For to kast the myrour down,
That lyght over al Rome toune.
The kyng asked the clerk bathe,
What he scholde gyf hem twae.
That oon clerk sayed to the kynge,
'Certis, sire, we wylle no thynge,
Er the myrrour be broght a-doune,
And than gyf us oure warrysoun.'
Quod the kyng, 'So mot I the,
I graunt wel at hit so be.'
Thanne sayed the heldest brothir,
'Sire kynge, thou most do anothyr;
Ale prevyliche and stille
Twa coffyns thou most fylle
Of golde and of preciouse stonnys.
Let make the coffynys for the nones,
Hye that thay were dyght,

And the myrour schal lese hys lyght.'
"The kynge hadde em redy dyght,
And fylde thaym fulle that ilk nyght.
Oppon the morne the way the nome,
Ryght to the cité of Rome.
On morwen thay wenten messe to here,
And after went to play i-fere;
Into the felde the way thay nome,
And lokyd that no man come,
And maden lytyl pyttys twaye,
And byrid the coffyns bathe,
And setten redy markys there
Wydyr-out the coffyns were,
A[nd] went forth as stille a ston,
And comen to the emperour anon,
And sayed, 'We wyte, sire emperour,
About this cité gret tresour,
Undyr the erth hit hys hyde;
And yf thou wylt, hyt schal be kyde.
For a sweven us come to nyght,
Were the tresour hys undir erth dyght.'
"Quod the emperour, 'By saynt Martyn,
And I wole do wefor of myn.'
Atte the emperour thay toke leve,
Ant wenten hom tho hyt was even;
On the morwen wen the day wa[s] bryȝt,
To the emperour thay come ful ryȝt,
And sayden, 'Certis, syre emperour,
We have aspyed wher hys the tresour;
Therfore, sire, tak with ous a man,

That be wys man, ant can
Stond by ous a lytil stounde,
To save the tresour whan hit hys founde.'
"The emperour toke with thaym a man anon,
And thay dydden ham to goon,
And dolven a lytyl withinne the grounde,
And the tresour was sone founde.
Thay wenten anoon to the emperour,
And schewden hym that nobil tresour.
The emperour was payed ful wel,
And wende hit were al gospel
That the clerkys dyden hym to wite,
And al was fals every smyte.
Tho hyt neghyt toward evene,
The twa clerkys token leve,
And went toward hare in agayen,
Thare thay haddyn al nyght layen.
Wyth myche myrthe to bede thay ȝede,
For thay hoppen for to spede.
A-morwen when the day spronge,
In thayr bede thay thought longe,
To the emperour they gune hye,
For to blere more hys eye.
That on clerke sayed anoon,
'*Par fay*, syre, we moten goon,
That the tresour were fete,
That we have of to nyȝt mete:
Let senden a man the tresour to bede,
As he that instay with ous ȝede.
Ham to-lywryd a man anon,

And thider fast thay gone gone;
Thay ne dyggyd bot a lytil stounde,
The coffyn was ful sone founde,
Hyt was no need depe to delve,
He may wel fynde that hyde hym selven.
Thay brogten anoon the tresour
Ryght byfore the emperour.
The emperour was glad tho,
That he hadde sylke clerkys two,
That wyste ware to fynde so evene
Ware were tresour hyd so evene.
Tho the emperour herde thaym lye,
And wend hit were al profecye,
And grete love to ham kaste,
And al was lorne at the laste.
Tho hyt neghit toward hevene,
The clerkys token anoon hare leve,
Ant went hom with myche honour,
And louhe to scorne the emperour,
And made ham at ese that nyght,
Til on morwen the day bryght.
On the morwen, tho the day sprong,
Thaym thought in hare bed ful longe;
Alle both thay goon goon
To the emperour anoon.
The ton sayed, 'Sire emperour,
Undir the pyler that berys merour,
Ther hys a golde hord bygune,
One the noblest undir sone.'
"'Certis,' quod the emperour,

'I wolde nought for half the tresour
That the myrrour fel a-down,
Hyt helpis for to save the toun.'
'Sire,' quod that on clerke,
'We conne ordeyn so our werke,
Of the tresour to have oure wille,
And late the myrrour stande stille.'
Quod the emperour, 'By sayent Myghel,
To swylke a forwarde I graunt wel;
Go, and God almyghty ȝoue spede,
And to the myrrour take hede.'
The clerkys take mynours anoon,
And to the piler thay goon;
Thay bygune to dygge faste,
Than thay sayen at the laste
How the piler stode in bras,
And with sowdyng sowdyt faste.
Than sayed the tone clerke,
'Mynours, lat be ȝoure werke.'
When the mynours were goon,
The clerkys made a fyre anoon,
The pylar fot al about,
And closyd the fyere al witout.
When thay hadden thus doon,
Thay wentyn hom, and hyt was non,
Byfore the emperoure thay come,
And anoon lef thay nome
To whend hom into thayr in,
To ordayn and dyvyse a gyne,
For to holde the piler up-ryght,

And the myrrour that was so lyȝt.
The emperour gaf thaym leve;
And thay wolde no langer byleve,
To hare in son thay come,
And at thayre ostage leve thay nome.
The fyere was hote and bernyd faste,
And malt the soudyng at the last;
Thay were bot a lytil withouten toun,
That the pyler fel a-doun.
Alle the lordys of the cité
Were ful sory, and myghte wel be;
Thay wente anoon to the emperour,
And asked of the myrour,
Why he let kast a-doun
That help for to save the toune.
Non answere couth the emperour,
Bot for covetyse of tresoure,
For to wyte of the wundyre,
Wat tresour was hyd ther-undyre.
Al that in Rome was,
Riche and pore, none ther nas,
That thay nere al at on
To sle the emperour anoon;
And a wyle yf ȝe wille dwelle,
How he was slawe I wyl ȝow telle.
For he let falle the myrour
For the covetyse of tresour,
Thay were al at on red,
Thourow tresour he scholde be dede.
Thay token gold a grete bal,

And letten grynde hyt ryght smal,
And puttyn out hys eyen two,
And fylden the hollys folle bothe,
Hys eyen, hys nose, and hys throte,
Thay fylden wit golde every grote;
Thus thay were at on acent,
For to gyfe hym that juggement."
Quod the emperesse to the emperour,
"Thus for golde and tresour
The emperour was slawe,
Withouten any proses of lawe.
Thus ar thou falle in covetyse also,
Thorow thy clerkys tales false;
Thou wylt by schent, by swyte Jhesus,
As was the emperour Crassus."
Quod the emperour, "By sayent Colas,
I ne schal nouȝt bytyde that cas,
For no lesyng that thay mcn telle.
My sone i-wys schal nouȝt dwelle
On lyve lengur than to morwen,
So Gode schilde me fra sorowe!"
And anon has hyt was day,
The emperour made non delay,
To sla the childe he was ful rade,
He ferde as man that were made:
He badde hys tormentours ilchon
Doe thys childe to deth anoon.
Thay dyden as the emperour bade.
When the childe schulde dee,
Thare was many a wyppyng hee.

Ryght withouten the palyes ȝate,
Thay mete mayster Caton thare-ate;
The childe lette hys [eyen] glyede
Oppon hys maystyr al asyde.
Mayistyr Caton that was wyse,
Lokyd on hys prentyse;
He loutyd to hym, and lete hym goon,
Ant went to the emperour anoon,
And gret hym with gret honour,
As men schulde an emperour;
And he answerd ryght in the place,
"Maugré have thou and male grace!"
"A! sire," quod he,
"*Mercy per saynt charité!*
For Goddis love, syre emperoure,
Hyre me speke for thyn honour."
"Have doo, traytour," quod he,
"Late see what thy resoon schal be."
"Sire," quod mayster Caton,
"Hyt hys al agayen reson,
That a dome man schal bere juggment,
And for lesyngs been schent.
Yf thy sone to day hys slawe,
Withouten any prossesse of lawe,
Also mote the befalle,
As dyde the burgees in hys halle,
That bynam hys byrdys lyf,
For the tale of hys wyfe."
Quod the emperour, "By seynt Colas,
Thou schalt telle me of that cas,

That thou sayest that was bytyde,
Of the burges and hys berde."
" Sire," quod mayster Caton tho,
" Thy sone that hys to dethe go,
Lete a knyght or a swayn
Anon brynge the chylde agayne,
And lete hym on lyfe dwelle,
Whille that I my talle telle;
Or by Good that alle wrought,
I nylle telle the ryght nowt,
Bot the childe be eftyr sent,
That hys toward hys deth went."
The emperour comande anoon
Aftyr the childe for to goon.
Than gladdyd many a man,
And mayster Caton hys tale bygane.

ATTALE.

" Hit was a burgeis and hadde a wyf,
And love hyre as hys ouen lyfe;
And hadde a popynjay at spake,
And wyst by hys wyf a lake,
And tolde hym when he ham cam,
Anothyr lotby scho nam;
And than bygane to wax stryfe
Bytwen the godman and hys wyfe.
The godman went a day to playe,
Out on jornay or twae,
To frendys that he sawe nowt 3ore,
No wyste when he schulde more.
When the goodman was went,

Than was the lemman after sent,
And madyn myrth and melodye,
Ryght byfore the bryddys eie.
The wyf she thout oppon a wylle
For to do the birde a gyle,
And ful sone scho was thought
How that gyle myght be wrought.
Scho hadde a knave al at hyr wile,
That wyst hyr priveté loude and stille;
Scho madde hym sette a leddy[r] on hygh,
And oppon the laddyr he styghe,
A piger of watyr he fete
And oppon the rof he hyt sette;
Oppon the rof he made an hole,
He went don a[nd] bare uppe a cole,
And a torche up ther-myde,
And as the wyf hym badde he dyde.
When thay were a-bede y-fere,
The wyf and hyre topinyere,
The knave hadde al hys thynge dyȝt,
He lokyd in and sawe lyght,
And bygan onnoon hys rage,
And cast watyr oppon the kage.
When he hadde caste twyes or thrye,
He dyde anothyr maystrie,
Grete blowen bladdyrs he brake,
And thay gave a gret crake.
He tende hys torche at a cole,
And putte in ate the hole.
The wyf sat oppon hire bede,

And made has scho were a-drede;
Bote ofte sayed, 'Benedicite!
What thynge may thys be?'
"Quod hire horlyng in the bede,
'Ly stille a[nd] be nought a-drede;
Hyt hys lyghtyn, thondyr, and rayne:
Ly doun in thy bede agayn.'
The byrde stode and sawe and herde
Al that gile hou hyt ferde,
And whende hyt were soth that ho sayed,
And bylle undyr wynge layede,
And toke rest tyl hyt was daye,
And the horlynge went hys way.
When the godman hame cam,
To the cage the waye he nam,
And askyd the byrde how hyt ferde;
And the byrde answerde,
And sayed, 'sythyn I sawe the laste,
I have been ful sore agaste.'
"Quod the goodman to hys birde,
'Tel me what was the bytydde.'
'Sire,' he sayed, 'when thou wer gon,
Oure dame lemman cam anoon,
He was sent aftyr fol sone,
And dyde as was to done—
And the nyght that was
There byfel a wondyr cas,
Hyt raynyd and lygnyd and thonryd fast,
And alle we were sore agaste.'
The godman went to hys wyf,

And abrayder of hyr lyf,
That scho hadde don wil he was oute,
And callyd hys wyf foule scout.
'Alas! sire,' quod the wyf,
'Why schul we lede thys lyf?
Thou lovest to myche thy byrdys lore,
And al he lyees, by Goddy[s] hore.'
'Dame,' he sayed, 'by my hals,
Now thow schalt be proved fals:
While I was out he was here,
And in my chambyr ȝe lay i-fere,
And that nyght the wedyr was strong,
Hyt laytyd, thondred, and reynned among,
Al that nyght til hyt was day,
Thyn horlyng in that bede lay.'
"'A! sire,' quod scho, and was bolde,
'He that that lesyng hase tolde,
He lyed, by Good that alle hase wroght,
Hyt raynyd ne thondryd ne layt nout
Sythen thou wentyst out of thys toune,
And by neghbours prove ȝe moune.'
'Certis,' quod the godman,
'I wil foundyn yf I can
Prove the fals ryght anoon.'
He clepyd hys neghburs ilkon:
When thay were al come,
In concel thay were al nome,
Whethyr anny rayn, thondyr, or lyȝt
Hadde be of al that seven-nyght.
Than the neghbours answerd anoon,
'Swylk wedyr wastyr noon

Of al thys seven-nyght and more.'
Than for-thout the burges sore,
That he hadde hys wyf myssayde,
And dyde anoon a lyther brayed;
Ryght in that ilke selve rage
He slowe the byrde in the cage.
Thus the burges thowrow hys wyf
Bynam hys good byrd hys lyfe.
So woltou, sire emperour,
Do thy self lytyl honour,
For the wordys of thy wyf
To bynyme thy sonne lyfe."
Quod the emperour anon,
"For love of hym, by Saynt Symon,
That was so foule bleryd hy[s] eye,
To day no schal my sone dee."
Tho the emperes herde telle
That he scholde on lyf dwel
Al that nyght tyl on morwen,
Than madde scho mykyl sorowe;
Al that day to nyght come
Alas! was ofte oppe y-nome;
When thay comen to bede y-fere,
The lady made sory chere.
Quod the emperour, "How may this be?
Dame, what hys wyth the?"
"Sire," scho sayed, "no thyng goode,
For soth thou makest me welny wode.
Thou art about thy selve to greve,
For thou wyl no concel leve,

No good concel undir hevene,
Bot of thyn fals clerkis sevene.
Therfore I ware the sykirlich,
Thou wylt love ham so myche,
That thou wilt [lese] thyn honour,
As dyde Herode the emperour,
That levyd concel agayn hys prowe,
Of seven clerkis, as dostou."
Quod the emperour, "By Goddis belle,
Of that cas thou most me telle."
"Gladlich," sayed scho,
"The bettyr yf hyt wylle bee."
For to brew the childes bale,
Anon scho bygan hyr tale.

A TALE.

Scho sayed, "Hit was a emperour,
A man of ful mykil honour,
And hadde seven clerkys wyse,
And broghten up a usage,
That dyde swyth gret damage.
Who so anny swevene by nyght,
O morne when the day was brygh t,
And rych gyftis with hym nam,
For the clerkis schuld telle
Of the sweven that walde byfalle,
And wannyn riches to hare byhove,
And broghten men in mysbyleve.
And the emperour for wynne,
Mayntend hom in synne,
At lete ham have al hare wille,

And ate the last speddyn ille.
The emperour hadde a maladye,
A wondyrful for the maystry;
Whan he wolde by any way
Out of Rome wende to play,
Withouten toun as he come,
Anon hys syght hym was bynom.
Thare-fore he was sore agremed,
And oft sythes sore aschamed.
Of hys clerkis cautel he toke,
And badde ham loke in hyr booke,
Yf thay myghten with ony clergye,
Hele hym of that maladye.
Bot thare was non of ham that couthe
Telle hym no thyng with mouthe,
How he myghte hele wyne
Of that maladye that he was inne.
At the last hyt was hym tolde
Of a wys clerke and a bolde,
That was hotyn Merlyn,
That couthe many a medicyn;
And anon he was sought,
And byfore the emperour broght.
Merlyn onon with gret honour
Gret anon the emperour.
Ate schortys wordys for to telle,
The emperour wolde no langer dwel,
Bot tolde Merlyn al hys cas,
Wych maner and how hit was.
'Sire,' quod Merlyn, that was bolde,

'Of thynges that thou haves tolde,
Cawe unto thy chambyr y-fere,
And in skyle ȝe schal here
Why and whare-fore hyt hys,
That ȝoure syght fares amys.'
The emperour and Merlyn anoon
Into the chambyr thay gonne gone;
When thay were in chambyr brought,
Merlyn told hym of hys thought,
And sayed, 'Syre emperour i-wys,
Undyr thy bede a caudron hys,
That buyles both day and nyght,
And that revys the thy syght,
And thy lyf there-fore hys worthy forlore,
Bot any medicyne ben don ther-fore;
And yf thow levest nought me,
Remou thi bed and thow mayst se.'
The bed was remoude sone;
Bot thare was more fyrst to doon,
Er the caudron wer founde:
Hyt was depe withinne the grounde.
The emperour sawe atte the laste,
That the caudron boylyd faste;
And anoon undirstood
Merlyn was trew and couthe gode,
And sayed, 'Merlyn, *par charité*,
What mervyle may thys bee?'
'Sire,' quod Merlyn, 'i-wys
I wyll telle the how hyt hys.
Thys sevene walmes sygnyfye

Seven devels in thy companye,
That ben thy seven clerkys,
That wyssys the to wykkyd werkys.
Thay been rycher of tresour
Than artou, sire emperour.
Thou havest maynted thaym ther-ine,
And God hys wroth for that synne.'
'Maystyr,' quod the emperour,
'Myght we wet with ony tresour,
With any concel arly or late,
Thys sevene walmys for to abate?'
'ȝe, sire,' quod Merlyn,
'Thow myght don hyt wylle a[nd] fyne.
Thyn sevene clerkys in the halle,
Sende aftyr the gretest mayster of alle,
And smyte of hys hede,
And anoon when he hys dede
Thow schalt fynde abatynge adone
The gretyst walme of the caudrone.'
The emperour taryd nowt,
The grettest mayster in was broght,
And fulfylde Merlyns rede,
And lete smytte of hys hede;
And went to the caudron anoon,
Than was the maystyr walme agoon.

"Quod [the] emperour, 'by saynt Martyne,
I fynde the trewe, mayster Merlyn;
For oght that man kan saye thare-to,
As thou concels I wole doe.'

"Quod Merlyn, 'Sire, so mot I waxe,

Thane most thou slae thy clerkys;
For by the deth that I schal dee,
Thou schal never see with eye
Withoute Rome toune i-wys,
Wille ony of ham on lyve hys.'
"Quod the emperour, 'So mot I thryve,
Thare schal none leve on lyve.'
He clepyd hys tormentours anoon,
And lete gyrde of the hedes ilkon,
And went to the caudron tho;
Than were the walmes a-goo.
When thay were all slawe,
Than the caudron was up-drawe.
"Quod Merlyn to the emperour,
'Sire, take knyghtes of honour,
And leppe to hors and wend to play
Out of thys cité a jorné or twae,
And say anon ryght
How lykkys the nou thy syght.'
The emperour wolde no langer abyde,
He dyde hym anoon to ryde,
And lopyn to hors ilkon,
And wente out of the cité anoon.
Tho the emperour come without the ȝate,
Til he was lyght hym thought to late,
To knele and thanke the kynge of myght,
That he hadde hys eyen syght.
Than hadde Merlyn grete honour,
And lafte with the emperour.
Lo, sire," quod the emperesse,

"Wylke a mykyl wykkednes
The sevene clerkys hadde welne do,
Ne hadde Merlyne take hede ther-to.
By God almygty that hys in hevene,
Thus wil thy clerkys sevene
Do by the, or ellys worse,
Yf thou lyvest, thow schal have cursse."
Quod the emperour, "by Goddys hore,
He schal never tene me more;
He that makes al thys sorowe,
Certys he schal be dede to morwen."
The day was comen, and nyght gon,
The emperour raes onnoon,
There ne most be no lete,
Anon hys sone was forthe fete,
And ladde ther he schulde dee;
There was many a wepyng heye
As the childe was forth ladde,
Ryght als God almyghty bade.
The sexte maystir than com be,
That was hoten maystir Jesse,
And sayed anoon, "Sire emperour,
Certys thou dost lytil honour,
For word of a womman
To do deth swylk a man
And thy sone scholde bee,
And he leve langer than ȝe.
And yf thou lattys hym lese the lyfe
For tales of thy wyf,
Also mot the bytyde

As dyde the knyght in hys pryde,
That deyed for dole of hys wyfe
Was woundyt wyth a lytyl knyfe."
Quod the emperour, "By Goddys belle,
That tale thou schalt me telle."
" By God," quod mayster Jesse,
" Thou schalt nout here a worde of me,
Bot thy sone be after sent,
That hys went to juggement."
The emperour comaunded anoon
After the childe for to goon.
Than waster many a glad man,
And mayster Jesse hys talle bygane.

A TALE.

He sayed, " Sire emperour, i-wys,
Hyt hys nowt lese, soth hyt hys,
Hyt was a knyght a riche schyreve,
That was lot hys wyf to greve.
He sate a daye by hys wyf,
And in hys honde helde a knyf,
At schort wordis for to telle,
In gamen bothe as thay felle,
With a lytil croume knyfe
The schyref woundyt hys wyf,
And took to hym so myche sorowe,
That he deyd oppon the morowen.
For al so mykyl as he slew hym selven,
In kyrke ȝarde men wolde hym nout delve,
He was beryd bon and fel
Withouten the toun at a chapel.

When in erth he was broght,
Hys wyf wolde goo thyn nouȝt,
Bot sayed for non wordlys wyne
Schulde no man parte hom a-twyne.
Of hyre frendys that were thare,
Baden hire lat be hyre fare;
At schort wordys, hyt was nought,
Myghte no mane torne hyre thoght,
Bote thare scho wolde be sykyrlyche
With hym that lovyd hyr so myche.
Quod on of thaym that was thare,
'Lete we been al thys fare,
Lete hyr dwel al hyer scille,
And when thys hete passid hys,
Scho wille come hom hire selve, i-wys.'
After clothes scho sent a knave,
And made hyre bede bysyde the grave.
At schort wordys for to telle,
There moste no man with hir dwelle.
The nyght was comen and day gon,
Scho made a good fyer anoon,
And sete hir doun thare bysyde,
For hyt was colde wyntir tyde,
Scho wype and hyr hondys wronge.
Fram the chappel a lytil wyght
Ther hovyd a ȝong knyght,
Bysyde galows were thare strange,
Ther were thre thefys an hangede;
That was hys rent for hys londe,
For to take theves on honde,
To saven thaym with al hys myght,

That no man stelle ham the forme ny3t.
Than the knyght was both 3onge and bolde,
He was swith sore a-colde,
And ate the chappel fyer he sawe lyght,
And rode thyderward ful ryght.
He lyght adoun of hys stede,
And into the chappel 3ede,
And the lavedy anoon he grete,
And by the fyre he hym sete,
And sayed, 'Dame, by the leve,
To warme me a wylle I mot have leve.'
The lavedy than sayed, '3ae,
Sire, welcome mot thou bee,
Yf thow thynkyst non othyr harme,
Bot to syt and make the warme.'
Than the knyght in hys atyre
Was warm of that fyere,
Hym thout hyt was a fayer leef,
And he was withouten a wyf,
And bygan onnoon to wowe,
And hyr hert bygan to bowe,
And knew wel hym by syght,
And wyst wel he was a knyght.
And anoon the lady bygane
To have love toward the mane;
Er hyt was passyd mydde-nyght
The lady was kast uppe-ryght,
And the knyght lay above,
And thus he wan the lady love.
The knyght leppe uppon hys stede,
For to wende and take hede

Whethir the thefys hange stille,
Wylle he was aboute hys wylle.
Wylle he was aboute hys playe
The ton thef was awaye.
To the chappel he pryked anoon,
And to the lady he made hys mone,
And sayed, 'Dame, me hys wo,
Myn on thef hys a-goo;
I am ful sore agast thare-fore,
Lest myn landys been lore.'
'Sire,' quod the lady tho,
'Ther-fore be nought wo,
Ne make thou dole ther-fore,
Ne schal nouȝt thy lond be lore.
To thys beriel we wyl goone,
And dyggyn uppe the cors anoone,
And hangge hym in hys stede
As fayer as the othyr dyde.'
'Dame,' quod he tho,
'On ilke half me hys wo:
There the thefys was funde,
The toon hadde a myche wounde;
He was woundyd, and no mo,
And that body hys a-goo,
And yf he were founde,
And he ne hadde no syche wounde,
Thanne were my londys lore,
And I were schent there-fore.'
'Sire,' quod scho, 'lat be thy stryfe,
Now havest thou bothe swerd and knyf;
Tak the toon or the tothir,

And gyf hym swylk anothir.'
'Certis, dame,' quod he tho,
'Erst me schulde be ful wo,
Er I wolde been ate the rede
To smyt a man that hys dede.'
"'Sire,' quod scho tho, 'ther-of al,
And drew a knyf out of hire schete,
That was kenne aud scharpe grounde,
And made in hys hed a wounde,
And put up hyr a knyf anoon,
And sayed, 'Sire, wel we goon.'
'Dame,' quod he, 'verrament,
3it myght I be schent:
In a countek he hadde lore
Twa of hys teth byfore.'
'Sire,' quod scho tho, 'by myn hede,
Thare-to goos a good rede;
He schal be markyd as was he,
Tak and bete out two or thre.'
'Dame,' quod he, 'by sayent Joon,
I nyl bet out never on.'
'Sire,' quod scho, 'by sayent Marie,
Yf thou ne wolt nowt than schal I.'
In hyr hoond scho took a stoon,
And knockyd out twa teth anoon!
'Sire,' scho sayed, 'this char hys heved,
Hye that we hadden i-sped
That he ware up drawe,
Er any day bygan to dawe.'
Thay token the corse anoon,
And to the galowes gone goone,

And hanged hym in that ilke stede
Ryght thare that othyr dyde.
"Lo, sire," quod maystir Jesse,
"Was nowt thys grete pyté,
That he was schent thus for hys wyf,
That for hir love lese hyse lyfe?
Thus wol thou, sir emperour,
Certes, lese thyn honour,
And thou bynym thyn sone the lyf
For the tales of thy wyf."
Quod the emperour to mayster Jesse,
"That cas no schal nouȝt betyd me;
So ever I broke my hede,
To day ne schal my sone be dede!"
The emperesse, when scho hit wyste,
What scho myght do scho no wyst;
So wo and so wroth scho was,
Myght hyr glade no solas.
To bede a even when scho cam,
A gret sygh up scho nam,
And sayed, "Alas! that harde stounde
That evere I was to man bounde!"
The emperour lay and herde,
And askyd hyr why scho so ferde.
Quod the emperesse, "So mot I the,
Al togyder hyt hys for the.
I see the wounde, hyt hys so wente,
Thourow thyn clerkys thow wil be schent;
Thay wylle gyle the wyth hare werke,
As dyde Genever the clerke,
That wyth qweyntyes and with bost

Schend the kynge and hys hoste."
Quod the emperour, "By saynt Colas,
Thou schalt telle me of that cas;
Hyt hys the wounderest that ever I herde,
I wylle wetyn how that ferde."
The emperesse bygan hyr tale,
For to brew the childes bale.

A TALE.

The emperesse, as ȝe mowe here,
Bygane hyre tale in thys manere,
And sayed, "Thre haythyn kynges thay come
Som tyme to bysege Rome;
And the pope thay walden have slawe,
And a gyed Rome aftyr thayr lawe,
And have been maystyrs of the toun,
And broght crystondom adon.
The haythyn men was ful strange,
And segyde the town lange;
Seven clerkys were in Rome,
And holpen for to take game,
Both day and the nyght,
That the cité were lokyd arygbt.
On ther was that was olde,
And of speche he was bolde,
And sayed, 'We been in thys cité
Seven clerkys of grete bounté;
Ilkon fonde, yf he may,
Fram harm save the cité a day.
Lete ilkon do what he can:
And for I am an old man,

Lete me have the last daye,
And fonde to do what I may.'
The hold man bythout hym faste
How he myght at the laste
Any thynge dyvyse
To make the haythyn kyngys to gryse;
And dyvysyde at the laste
A gyn that made ham alle agaste,
And alle was of hys oune thouȝt,
And woundyrlych hyt was wroght.
When hys day was come,
Hys concel was sonne nome;
He comaunded alle with mouthe
Arme thaym al wel as thay couthe.
Alle that in the cité were
Dyden as the olde mane gan lere;
And hym self anoon he styghe
Into the heyghest tour on hyghe,
And dyde oppon hym a wondir tyre,
Alle hyt glowyd as fyere;
In the othyr honde a swerde he tooke,
As tellys the Romauns booke,
And turnyd toward that syde
There the Sarsyns were strawyd wyde,
And bygane to skyrme bylyve,
As al the worlde schul to-dryve;
With a qweyntyse fyere he keste
Ryght bytwene hys swyrdys in lenkthe,
As tho he smytte hyt out with strenthe.
The Sarsyns byhelde faste,
And many were ful sore agaste,

For nowt on of thaym thare wase
That couthe dyvyse wat hyt was.
The heythyn kyngys that there were
For-thought sore that thay com thare,
For al thay were sore a-frygh t,
When thay seyen that woundir sygh t;
Ilkon askyd othyr tho
What thynge hyt was that ferde soe.
Tha oon kynge was an olde mane,
And hys reson thus bygane:
'Lordys, ȝe schul here, y-wys,
What me thynke that hyt hys;
The crysten men hase non mygh t
Agayens us for to fygh t,
And hare gode hys of grete mygh t,
And hys into erth lygh t,
Certynlyche that hys he.
For sothe I rede that we fle;
For certis and he come adoune,
He wylle sle syre Mahoune,
And oure othyr goddys ilkon,
And leve of us on lyve nought on.'
When the kynge hadde thus tolde,
Thare was non of hem so bolde,
That durst langer abyde fyghte,
And anon turnyd to flygh t.
When thay of Rome sawe that sygh t,
That Sarzyns turnyd to flygh t,
Thay wenten out harmyd ilkon,
Al that myghten ryde or goon,
And withinne a lytyl stounde

The Sarsyns ȝeden al to grounde.
Thys Gynever the clerke,
With hys wylys and hys werke,
Made to fle with hys boste
Thre kyngys and hare hoste.
Thus wyle thyn clerkys false
With hare wylys schende the alse;
And thou schalt lese thyn emperyre,
And thy sone be lorde and sire.
Thus is thy concel wrought.
For to brynge the to nought."
Quod the emperour, "So mot I the,
Emperour schal he nought bee;
Na schal hym no man lenger borowe;
Certys, he schal by dede to morowen."
Than hadde the emperesse hire wylle;
Thay felle on slepe, and lay stille.
O morwen he ne forgat hyt nouȝt,
The childe was outen of the toun brouȝt,
Toward the deth he was lade;
Than was the emperes glade.
The sevenet mayster rode bylyve,
For to holden hym on lyve,
And was hoten Marcius,
And sayed to the emperour thus:
"Syre, ryghtwys emperour,
Thou dost thy selven lytyl honour,
Thou levest wykked concel i-wys,
That makes the fare amys;
And yf thy sone hys don to dede,
And slaue for thy wyfvys rede,

Gode, that tholyd deth on tree,
Leve so bytyde the,
As dyde hym that levyd more
The falnesse of hys wyfvis lore,
Thane that hym selven sawe and herde,
And ther-fore he mys-ferde."

Quod [the] emperour, "By sayent Gervas,
Thou schalt telle me of that cas."

Quod Marcius to the emperour,
"Nowt a word, by sayent Saveour,
Bot thow slake thy sonnys sorowe,
And late hym lybbe tyl to morwen."

Quod the emperour, "By sone and mone,
I not what hys best to doone;
ȝe be about to save my sonys lyffe,
And yf hit hys sothe that sayes my wyf,
Certes, mayster, ȝe were worthe
To be sete qwyke in erthe."

"Sire, sire," quod Marcius,
"Hyt hys nowt so, by swet Jhesus!
That thou schalt wet by tyme
To morwen lange or pryme."
The emperour comandyd anon
After the childe for to goon.

A TALE.

Than gladdyd maystyr Marcius,
And bygan hys tale thus,
To the emperour anoon ryght:—
And sayed, "In Hungerye was a knyght,
And mete a sweven byfore the daye,

That a levedy by hym laye;
Bot hyt was a wondir cas,
He wyst never what the lady was.
When he wok, hyt was so faste
Hys love oppon that lady caste,
Tha[t] hym thout withine a prowe,
And he see hyr, he couth hir knowe.
" And the levedy, that self nyght,
Mete ryght so of the knyght.
" The knyght tok hors and armes anon,
And tok hys leve, and dyde hym to gon,
To loke were he myght hir fet,
The levedy that he of met.
He rode hys way thre wykkes and more,
And oft sythes syghyde sore;
And hys way forth he name,
Into Puyle than he came.
As he rode in the londe,
O day a toun he fande,
And a castel was ther-inne,
That was ivel for to wynne.
The lorde of the castel
Hadde swythe a fayere juwel,
On the fayerest womman to wyfe
That ever myght here lyfe;
And the godman was gelous,
And in a tour mad hyr a hous,
And ther-in most no lyfe
Bot a mayden and hys wyfe.
And for he wolde of gyle be ware,
Hys owen body the keye he bare;

And never more was the dore undo,
Bot when [he] wolde comen hyr to.
The knyght that met that sweven at nyght,
Of that lady was so bryght,
Thorow the toun as he rode,
A whyle he hovede and abode
Ryght a lytyl fram the toure
Thare was the lady of honour
That mete the sweven of the knyght,
In bede thare scho lay al nyght.
The knyght kest hys hee on hyghe,
And ate the wyndow the lady he see,
And by the syght he wyst hir thoght,
That was the lady that he hadde sowt;
And in the levedy hert hyt felle,
That was the knyght that ho loved wel.
Bothe thare hertys were ful lyghte,
That haythher hadde of othyr syght.
The knyght wente into the toune,
And took hys ine, and lyght adoune;
Hys hoste he in councel nam,
And sayed, 'Who hys thys castel,
That hys touryde and kernelde wel?'
"'Sire,' quod he, 'by saynt Symyoun,
Hyt hys the lordes of thys toun,
A swythe godman y-wys,
And in mykyle tene hys.
In thys contré hys a knyght
That werys on hym day and nyght,
And hase done twa ȝere and more,
And that greves hym ful sore.

He mande hym wel ate the knyght
Al the daye and al the nyght;
On morwen tho the day came,
Towarde the castel the waye he nam,
And wyth the lorde sone he mete,
And ful hendlych hym grete,
And sayed, 'Syre, I am comen
For were that thou havest undirnome,
For to helpe the for of thyne,
Thy werre for to hende and fine.'
"Quod the lorde, 'So mot I the,
Thou art ful welcome to me.'
Atte schorte wordis for to telle
He made the knyght with hym to dwelle;
And he was good werrour and wyes,
And conquerd al his enmys.
The lord lovyd hym as hys lyfe,
And al hys good, so hys wyfe,
He bytoke undyr hys hond,
And made hym stywarde of al hys londe.
"Oppon a day he went to playe,
Undir the tour he made hys waye;
The lady loked oute on heygh,
And in the face the kynghte scho see,
And kende anoon that was hee
That scho desired so mykyl to see.
The knyght kest upe hys hee
To the lady that sat so hye.
The levedy durst speke nowte,
Bot of a qweyntys scho was bythoute;

There were in hyr chambyr y-nowe
Fayer reschys and longe growe,
With that on and with that othir
Scho putte ilke resche in other,
And made a karole in a stounde,
The ton hende touched to grounde,
And the othir scho helde on heygh.
And the knyght byhelde and see,
And wyst wylle in hys thowt,
Why that nicote was y-wroght.
The knyght privelyche and stylle
Asayed alle the lordys wille,
And thout wydyr-out and were,
That he wolde a toure rere
Lenand to the mykyl toure,
To do in hys tresour.
Thorow a qweyntyse he thout to wyne
The lady that was loke there-inne.
" Quod the lorde, 'Ne spare nought,
Bot hye that hyt were wroght.'
Oppon a day stylle as stoon
He sent eftyr masons anoon,
Thay schuld ordeyn and dyvysse
To make a waye with qweyntysse
Out of on tour into that othyr.
And a mason and hys brothyr
Undirtoke anon ryght
Hyt schulde be qwentlyche dyght,
That he schulde with hir speke
That was in the toure steke.

That on masson was a clerke,
And made so qwentilich the werke,
That to levedy come the knyghte,
When he wolde, daye and nyghte,
That no man myght the wyser be,
Bote the levedy hyr selfe and hee.
So qweyntlich hit was wroght,
The lorde persaved hit nowt.
O daye to hire he cam,
And hys leve than he name
A rynge of hir fynger scho tooke,
As tellys the Romans booke,
And put hyt on hys,
And, 'Lemman, were thou thys,
And late my lorde see hit arygh t,
And brynge hyt me agayn er nygh t.'
He dyde on the renge anoon,
And took hys leve, and dyde hym to gon.
Ate the met as he sate,
The lorde the rynge undirrat,
And hadde merveyle in hys thout
How the rynge was thydir brogh t.
After mete the way he nam,
And to the levedy sone he cam;
Tho the lorde hadde y-swore,
3yt cam he in byfore,
And kest the rynge in hyre barme,
For to save hom bothe fra harme,
And tok hys leve, and dyd hym to gon.
And the lorde cam in anoon,

And sayed, 'Dam, were hys thyn rynge,
That was ate our bygynnyng
The first gyfte that I gaf the,
That rynge late me see.'
'Sire,' scho sayed, 'thou myght wel,
And many anothir juwel.'
'Dame,' he sayed, 'lat ham bee,
I wyl no mo than that see.'
To hyre forcer scho gan goon,
And broght the rynge anoon
That lay loken in hir tie;
Thus scho bleryd hyre lordys eie.
Anoon as the lorde was agoone,
The styward come in anoon;
Tho levedy tolde hym al that cas,
How hyr lord bygylyd was,
And sayed, 'Sire, doute the nowt,
Al thy wylle schal be wroute,
And I wylle telle the anoon
Whilke manere and howe.
Saye thou havest in thyn contree
Slane a man of grete bounté,
There-fore were thy londys lore,
And thou were outlawde ther-fore;
And saye thou hase a leve wyfe,
A lemman that hys nouȝt thy wyfe,
And scho hys comen in a message
To come hom to thyn erytage;
And he wylle besyche the
That he mot thy lemman see.

And thou schalt graunt hym anon;
And I wyl be redy to goon
In anothir tyre than thys,
To se me whan hys wyl hys.
And whan he hase sene me hys fylle,
Thanne mowe we haven oure wylle
To gone wan we wyllen in fere,
Thanne wylle he no talys here
Nowthyr of me no of the,
Bot wene that I thy lemman be.'
"Quod the styward, 'That may nouȝt fye,
And he se the with hys eye,
Anon as he haves a sygh t,
He wyl knowe the anoon ryghte.'
"'Sire,' quod scho, 'be myn hede,
My rynge schal make oure parti goode,
That he on thy fynger see,
And sythyn he fande hyt here on heye;
Ther-fore dout the nought,
Thys schal been al hys thought,
As a rynge was lyche anothyr,
So may a womman be lyche anothir.
There schal the knote of gyle be knyt,
The rynge schal blynde hys wyt.'
The styward went, and was glade,
For to make hys lorde made,
And tolde hym that hys pes was nome,
And how hys lemman was comen,
And hadde broght the messages
To come home to erytage;

And asked hym leve for to wende.
And hys loverd was ful hende,
And sayed, 'Yf thy lemman hys comen,
For soth scho hys welcome;
Late hyre take to nyght rest,
To morne scho sal be my geste.'
On the morne to the mete scho cam,
And by the hond the lorde hyre nam,
And faste by hym he hyr sete,
And made hyre to saye hys mete;
And he karf hys mete with hys knyf,
And sat and byhelde hys wyf,
And in gret thout he was
Where hyt were hys wyfe er hit nas.
Alse he sat in mornynge,
Anon he thout oppon the rynge,
And thout anoon in hys thought
That hys wyf was hyt nowt,
Bot as a rynge was lyche anothyr,
So was a womman liche anothyr,
And sate stille and made hym glade,
And thus hys wyf made hym made.
Whan the bordis were adoun,
Scho made semlant for to swone,
For scho wolde ben a-gon
Into the toure anoon;
And thyder scho was sone brought
That hire lorde wyste hyt nowt.
The lorde he ne forgat hyt nowt,
Scho was algate in hys thought;

For the merveyle that he syghe,
He went into the tour on hygh.
To the levedy when he cam,
In hir armes scho hym nam;
He was blyth as bryde on bogh,
And wende al were god y-nowe,
And dweld with hir al tha nyght
Til on the morne the day was bright.
The styward let take al hys good,
And bere hit into se flood
Into a god schype and trewe,
That was maked al newe.
When the wynd was good to goon,
The senescal tok hys leve anoon.
The lorde was bothe good and hynd,
And gaf hym leve for to wende,
And hym self broght him in way
Into the see a myle or tway,
Wyth truppys and other mynstralcie,
Wyth many maner of melodye.
The lord halpe with myrthe and playe
Tollyd hys oune wyf away.
Thay token leve and wente o-two,
And cysten as love schulde do.
The schyppe saylyd over the sonde,
The lorde went agayn to londe;
Into the tour the way he nam,
He lokyd both forth and bynne,
And fande noman ther-inne.
Than gaf hym hys hert anoon

That hys wyf was goon
With the senescal away:
Than sayed he, walaway!
That ever was he man boren!
Than was al hys myrthe lorne.
He lepe out of the tour anoon,
And than brake hys neke boon.
Thus was the goodman schent,
And with hys wyvys wylys blent.
Sire emperour," quod Marcius,
"Ryght on thys manere and thus
Schal thy wyf bygile the,
And thou leve hir, so mot I the.
Hyre self with hyre wylys alone
Haves gylyd my felawes ilcon,
And me scho wille, yf scho may,
Er to morwen that hyt be day,
For to bryng thy sone to sorowe;
Certys he schal speke to morowe,
Thou schalt wyet er aut longe
Whethir of thaym hase the wronge."
Quod the emperour to Marcius,
"That were me lever, by swet Jhesus,
Than any thyng that men telle couth,
To here my sone speke with mouthe,
For to see the ryght way,
Who were gylty of thaym tway."
"Sire," quod Marcius, "be stille,
To morwen thou schalt have thy wille."
When the lady herde thys,
Scho was swyth sory, i-wys;

Than wolde scho telle no more,
But al that nyght syghyd sore.
Oppon morwen ryght at prime,
The emperour thout tyme;
In the paleys withouten the halle
Thare he lette asembyle alle,
Erlys, barouns, sympile knyghtys,
For to here jugge the ryghtys
Bytwen hys sone and hys wyfe,
Whethir schuld lese the lyfe;
For he hadden sworen hys hoth,
Were he lyf, were he loth,
He schuld dye withouten delay
Who were founde gylty that day.
When thay wystyn wat to doone,
The pepyle was semyld sone,
And ilke man hyed bylyve,
For to have the childe on lyve.
The emperour come out of hys halle,
And sete hym doun among thaym alle;
The emperes was broght with pryde,
And set adoun by hys syde.
The childe was anoon efter sent,
To come byfore the parlement.
The childe was forthe broght;
Many a man was glade in thought.
Byfore hys fader he fal on knee,
And cryed mercy for charyté;
And sayed, "Fadyr, I have no gylte
Of thyng that hys oppon me pute,

Certys, no more than hadde he
That hadde ben dronke on the see,
Na hadde Goddys help ben neye,
That broght hym to a roche on hye;
And thourow myght of Godys sonde
He was founden and broght to londe!"
"Certys, sone," quod the emperour,
"Hyt were us lytil honour,
Bot we myght on wyle dwelle,
And suffyre the thy tale telle."
And thay sytyn stille ilke mane,
And the childe hys tale bygane.

A TALE.

"There was a man that was bolde,
And hadde a vertu that was hyghe,
Alle men lovede hym that hym syghe;
Anothyr vertu Gode on hym layed,
He wyst wat alle fouls sayed.
Bysyde hys fadyr court a myle
In the se was an ile,
And was no man in bot on,
A hermete in a roche of ston.
The fadyr and the sone o day
Went thyder for to play,
And thay rowed and were hot;
Ryght byfore oppon the bote
Thre ravenes lyghte adoun,
And made a gret gargoun.
The child was wys and of no bost,

And hadde wyt of the Holy Gost,
And wat thay sayden he undirgat,
And hadde mykyl wondir of that,
And hys ore faste he drowe,
And byhelde hys fadyr, and loughe.
" Hys fadir asked, that by hym sate,
Why he loge and at wat.
'Fadir,' quod he, 'so mot I the,
I louke ate the ravens thre,
That sayden in har gargoun,
Anon as thay seten adoun,
That I schulde hyre-after be
Man of so grete pousté,
That thou schuldest by glad to fonde
To gyf water to my honde,
And myn moder glad to hye
To brynge a towayl myn handys to drye.'
The faders hert was ful of pryde,
And thout hyt schulde nought so bytide,
And tok hys sone by the hode,
And threw hym into the salt flod.
When he was in the se kast,
To dye he was sore agast;
The wynde blew, the se was wod,
And bare the childe into the flod.
Thorow helpe of Gode that syt on hye,
He negyd sone a roche nye;
Out of the water he went anon,
And clame uppon a roche of ston,
And there he was ivel dyght

Twa dayes and twa nyght,
Ther he sat on the roche on hye,
That no sokyr he no see.
Jhesus gan sokur hym sende;
Thare come a fyscher that was hende,
When he come the roche nyghe,
He kest up hys eyen and sygh
The child oppon a roche harde,
And drew hym fast thyderwarde.
To the roche when he cam,
The childe into the bot he nam.
Thar come a strem that was wode,
And bare ham into the salt flode
So fere fram there the childis was bore,
That alle hys knowlech was lore,
And he aryved fayr and welle
Undir a nobil castille.
Out of the bot the childe he nam,
And into the castle sone he came,
To the warden of the castel,
And solde hym the childe bone and fel.
Anoon aste the childe was knowen,
He was byloved with he and lowe,
Alle that in the castel were;
And many wynter he dwelde there.
In the londe thare he was,
The kynge bytydde a woundir cas:
Thre ravens with a lothly crye
Sewyd the kynge ever ful nye,
Were he rode or were he ȝede,

That al the londe thare-of tok hede.
The kynge was schamyd ther-fore,
That hym were levere ben unbore;
Over alle hys lond hys bref was sente
To aselen a comuyn parlyment,
To wyt conceyl of ham alle
Of that kas that was byfalle.
The warden of the castel
Let atyren hym ful wel,
And the child with hym nam,
And to the parlement he cam.
When the parlement was nome,
And the pepyle al come,
The kynge walde no lenger dwelle,
Wat hym grevyd he gan telle,
And to the pypyl he sayed this,
'Who can telle me why hyt hys
That the ravens on me crye,
And brynge me out of that vylanye,
That the ravens crye no more,
Where-fore me schames sore,
I wyl gyf hym alf my londe,
And sykyr hym trewly on honde,
That I may gyf, by my lyf,
And my dogter to ben hys wyf.'
"The childe the fram the castel cam,
These wordys undirnam,
And that wyt God hym gafe,
That on fouls lydyn he couthe;
The childe hys mayster in concel nam,

And sayed, 'Mayster, that I am
That can of the sothe telle,
Why thys ravens crye and ȝelle,
And delyver the kynge
Of alle hare lodly crying?'
"'Sone,' he sayed, 'yf thou art bolde,
To do that thou havest tolde,
To the kynge wille I goon,
And put forth thy nyddis anoon.'
'Mayster,' he sayed hardylich,
'Put forth oure nedys boldelych.'
Hys mayster tok the way anoon,
And byfore the kynge he gan goon,
And sayed, 'Sire, hire hys a mane
That rydilich telle can
Why the ravens on the crye,
That dos the al that vylanye,
And make ham take away thayr flyght,
And thou wol holden that thow hase hyght.'
The kynge byhelde the childe faste,
And gret love to hym cast,
And sayed, 'Certis, that have het
I wylle holden, and ȝyt do bet.'
Byfore alle the baronage
He sykyrd hym of that mariage.
Byfore the kynge he knelyd adoun,
And bygan hys resoun,
And sayed, 'Sire kynge, as ȝe moue see,
ȝonder standys ravens thre,
Twa males and o femel;

That to raven was ful holde,
In a wedyr that was colde,
And for he was nouȝt of myght
To fynde hys make mete aryght,
For glotonye he brake hys fayth,
And bete hys make and drove hire awaye.
Hys make flee hest and weste,
And fond for to do hir best,
And met a raven that was bolde,
A ȝonge raven and nowt holde,
And soght a make and hadde noon,
And took hyr to hys make anoon,
And over al about he drowe,
And fand hys make mete y-nowe.
The colde wedirs was a-goo,
Ungyr, colde, and al wo,
The holde raven was hote of blode,
And sowt hys make has he were wode,
And fande ham both there thay were,
Hire and hyr make y-fere;
He chalanged hire for hys,
The tohyr sayde he chalanged amys.
Hyre fore thay cryen oppon the,
That art kynge and havest pousté,
And thay been in thy lond lent,
And thou schalt gyfe the juggement;
Whan the juggement hys gyven,
Yf ever more wyl ȝe levene
Hyre thaym anny more crye,
Hardylich put out my eye.'
Ever or he walde goon,

The kynge gaf juggement anoon,
'For the holde raven brak hys fayth,
Wyth wronge drof hys make away,
That juggement I gyfve,
The ȝonge that helpe hyr for to lyve,
He schal have that he ches,
And the holde go makeless.'
When the juggement was gyven,
The ȝonge raven schulde ben above,
The kynge no sawe ham never more.
Than levede he the childys lore,
And loved the childe as hys lyf,
And gaf hym dogter to wyf,
And was sesed with alle hys thynge,
And byleved with the kyng,
And ferde swyth myry and wylle.
And hys fader in powerte fel,
In hys countreth, soth to telle,
He ne myght nout for schame dwel,
And wenten thyne hys wyf and hee
Fer into anothyr countré,
And lyved thare, he and hys wyf,
And lade swyth sympyl lyf.
The childe let privelyche inquere
In what stad hys fadyr were;
Thay fande hem that went to spye
In the toun of Plecie.
Than went he agayn anoon,
As fast as he myght goon
With hys fet oppon the grounde,

And sayed, 'Sire, I have founde
That thou byden aspye
In the cité of Plecie.'
The childe dyght hym rychliche,
And went thydir astiliche;
Into Plecie when he was comen,
Ner hys fadir hys in was nome.
To mete when he was redy to gon,
After hys fadir he sent anoon,
And hys modir, a good wyf,
For to gladen hom of hare lyfe.
When thay comen into the halle,
Thay fayer resavyde alle;
The childe askyd watyr anoon,
And hys fadir bygan to goon,
And the water wolde have fet,
Bot he was sone let.
Hys modir wold the towel have broute,
Bot othir wolde suffry hyt nouȝt.
And the child al togydir syghe,
And fadir and modir neghid nee,
And by the honde both he nam,
And sayed, 'For sothe, ȝoure sone I am.
Fadyr, nowe hyt hys byfalle
That I herde the ravens telle;
I tolde ȝou withouten lesyng
What thay sayeden in hyr gavlyng:
For I hire cryhyng undirstode,
Ther-fore thou puttyst me in the flod,
Bot Jhesus held me by the hond,
And broght me sonne to londe.

Fadir, hadde I than be dronken,
And in the salt flod sonkyn,
So God schild me from curs,
Now thou myghtyst fare the wars.'
Than walde the sone speke no mare,
And kyst hym and hys modir in fere,
And made thaym swyth fayer chere,
And gaf thaym londe and tresour,
And thay levedyn in mykyl onour."
Quod the emperour sone to the emperour,
"Hyre fel the fadir lytil honour,
That for a wylle of hyghe blode
Put hys sone in the floode.
"Fadyr, so hase thou talent
To sla me without juggement;
And certys I have no more gylte
Than he that was in the see pute.
Bot the emperes loves me nout,
There-fore hit was hir thout,
With wichecraft and with nygrimancie,
Ordaynde that I schulde dee.
Myn maysters loked in the mone,
And tolde me wat was to doone;
And sythen I was aftir sent,
Hadde I spokyn I hadde ben schent,
And my seven maysters also.
Thus was my welle tornyd into wo;
And alle was thorow thy wyvis rede,
For scho wolde that I hadde ben dede.
Certys, sire, thus hyt hys;
Do now what thy wille hys."

The emperour was ful of godnesse,
And sayed anoon to the emperes,
"Dame," he sayed, "wat sayes thou?
Avise the wille of thyn answere;
For the hede that I bere,
Bot thou may the fayrer skere
Of that myn sone haves tolde here,
For alle the men that beres breth,
Thou schalt dye on schentfol deth."
The emperes, sothe for to telle,
Was combird wit fynde of helle,
That scho myght nout forsake,
That let the treson make,
With wychecraft and felonye,
For to make the childe to dye,
And sayed, "My lord, sire emperour,
For Godys love and thyn honour,
Ordeyn wat thy willys bee,
Wat thou thynkest do by me,
For, certis, I may forsake nowt
The fame that on me hys brogh t.
That thy sone haves sayed i-wys,
Certeynlich soth hyt hys;
Hyt was al togydir my red,
For I wolde he hadde ben dede."
Thus the thef the emperesse
Knowleched hyre wykkednese,
Thorow the fyndys entysment;
And anoon scho was schent,
And bounden swyth fast,
And hadde hire juggement at the last.

Thus the childe wan hys lyf;
And the emperesse lees hire lyf;
And maynted hys son aryght
Bothe by day and by nyght,
And hys clerkys thre and fyve,
Tha[t] holpyn to save hys sone on lyve
With sevene talys that thay tolde,
The sevene clerkys that were so bolde,
Agayns the wyle traytoresse,
Hys stepmoder the emperesse.
There-fore the emperour
Dyde thaym swyth mykyl honour;
In alle thynges that he thout,
By hare concel alle he wroght;
And was wyduer al hys lyf,
He wolde never have no wyf,
That was algat in his thout;
For tresoun that scho hadde wrogt,
He ne durst dele with no mo,
Lest thay wrogten more wo.
To lyve gode lyf he bygane,
And bycam a chast man,
And paynyd hym with al hys myght
To holde ilke man to ry3t,
And lyvede in myrthe and solas,
And dyed wan Godys wylle was,
And went into heven-riche,
Thare joye and blysse hys evere i-lyche.
To that ilke blysse brynge us Gode,
That never in erth 3ed schodde.

Amen, amen, ffor charité.

NOTES.

Line 6.—*Helie.* In Weber's text the empress is called *Milisant;* in the Cambridge fragment, printed in our Introduction, p. lxx, she is called Dame *Ilacent.*

l. 10.—*Lovenden,* an error of the MS. for *loveden.*

l. 28.—*Kyd.* Sic MS.; probably an error for *and.*

l. 38.—*Baucillas.* The MS. reads erroneously *Caucillas.*

l. 164.—*Wastir,* of course, a mere corruption of *was there.* Conf. l. 2246.

l. 373.—*deye.* As this word does not rhyme with the preceding line, it is perhaps an error for *spille,* to perish.

l. 485.—*at.* Sic MS. for *that.* So again, l. 1556.

l. 509.—*tormentour.* This was a common term for an executioner at this period. It occurs frequently in the *Mysteries.*

l. 663.—*A.* Probably an error of the MS. for *and.*

l. 869.—*Hire isti.* For *here is thy.*

l. 926.—This line is defective in the MS.

l. 929.—*holde hor.* Sic MS. for *holte.*

l. 948.—*fryȝt.* The MS. has *syȝt.,* an evident error of the scribe.

l. 1130.—*vorthym.* For *worth him,* may there be to him.

l. 1367.—*scho.* The MS. has erroneously *to.*

l. 1526.—*Salner,* Salerno.

l. 1591.—*myl.* Sic MS.; probably for *wyl.*

l. 1605.—*wrothe som.* This should be printed as one word.

l. 1712.—*trhe.* Sic MS.

l. 2082.—*sayent Colas.* An abbreviation of *Nicholas,* which occurs repeatedly in this poem.

l. 2222.—*By Goddys hore*, i. e., *by God's grace.* Some old possessor of the MS. has erased this, and other similar exclamations at l. 2284, 2433; but the original words may still be traced.

l. 2258.—*Emperour anon.* The MS. reads erroneously, *maystyr Caton.*

l. 2336.—*Cawe.* Sic MS.

l. 2638.—*Genever.* In Weber's text the clerk is named *Gemes;* in the French texts it is *Genus* and *Genius.* It appears to be a mere corruption of *Janus.* This story occurs in the old compotists. See my edition of Philippe de Thaun, p. 31. The French metrical version tells us :—

> " Pour ce Genus dist le Genvier
> Le moys qui est devant Fevrier."

l. 2890.—*nicote.* Sic MS. for *niceté.*

l. 3134.—There is evidently a line wanting, which should rhyme with *bolde.* This is not the only instance of imperfections of this kind in the MS.

l. 2222.—*By Goddys hore*, i. e., *by God's grace.* Some old possessor of the MS. has erased this, and other similar exclamations at l. 2284, 2433; but the original words may still be traced.

l. 2258.—*Emperour anon.* The MS. reads erroneously, *maystyr Caton.*

l. 2336.—*Cawe.* Sic MS.

l. 2638.—*Genever.* In Weber's text the clerk is named *Gemes;* in the French texts it is *Genus* and *Genius.* It appears to be a mere corruption of *Janus.* This story occurs in the old compotists. See my edition of Philippe de Thaun, p. 31. The French metrical version tells us :—

> " Pour ce Genus dist le Genvier
> Le moys qui est devant Fevrier."

l. 2890.—*nicote.* Sic MS. for *niceté.*

l. 3134.—There is evidently a line wanting, which should rhyme with *bolde.* This is not the only instance of imperfections of this kind in the MS.

BSB Bayerische StaatsBibliothek
MDZ Münchener DigitalisierungsZentrum Digitale Bibliothek

Wright, Thomas, 1810-1877

The seven sages in English verse

London 1845
P.o.angl. 276 k-16
urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10748149-1